

THEOCOSMIA

*WILLIAM
NORMAN
WILSON*

KEGAN PAUL,
TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO.

THEOCOSMIA

OR

THE SPIRITWORLD EXPLORED

BY

WILLIAM NORMAN WILSON

IN TWO PARTS

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PREFACE

THE events and experiences recorded in this book are in every respect of a nature essentially new to man, and quite beyond the conception of his brain as developed under existing circumstances.

Careful reading and considerable thought will be required before any one can really awaken to the magnitude of the advance exhibited in this work. Every sentence and every line is correct in all respects, to the extent that a highly developed human brain, acting under exceptional privileges, could interpret unseen and immaterial conditions.

It will not be until the reader has perused the last line of this production that he will be fully able to appreciate how the writer was able to discard his material body, to assume a composite spiritual or immaterial body, and to go forth in this form, under extremely powerful aid, and investigate conditions heretofore intentionally and with reason hidden from man.

The thoughtful and intelligent reader, after mature consideration, will candidly admit that if there be an invisible world with immaterial properties and inhabitants, and if the intention be that material man shall be made acquainted with it in a reasonable way, then the method adopted was the only one reconcilable with common sense.

The conditions existing in those portions of the spirit-world referred to in this work, when carefully approached from the standpoint of reason as well as of faith, will present an entirely different complexion from that expected by man generally. No longer will it be possible seriously to consider eternal and unseen things with a mind inseparably associated with matter, such as in the past has been the case.

The entire work speaks for itself, and does not require any words of mine to commend it to careful examination.

THE AUTHOR

HOWDON RANCH,
HENRY, IDAHO, U.S.A.
March 18, 1903

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PART I

CHAPTER I

PREPARING FOR WORK

THE month of March 1899, found me engaged in translating Minerva's first work ("The Human Soul Revealed,") from spiritual currents of communication into written verbal explanations of mysteries pertaining to the soul, which in the past have been purposely withheld from man in order, if possible, to make him exercise faith, and thus prove whether or not he be worthy of heaven.

One day, while resting my brain from the exhaustion induced by this peculiar kind of work, I felt Minerva in my presence, yet not within the compass of my material vision. She, in her great knowledge and power, very well knew that I was suffering from acute nervous prostration, and now had come to try and strengthen and encourage me onward in my duty. In the course of her remarks she informed me that there was at that moment another spirit, as well as herself, prominently near me, that this newcomer had been in close attendance upon me for some time past, and was anxious beyond measure that I should be informed of her presence.

No doubt, for various reasons, there were many other spirits also curious on the same score, therefore Minerva must have had some special purpose in view in thus referring to the earnest desire of this spirit in particular to communicate with me. Further, the very fact that Minerva, with her consummate knowledge of spirits in

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their various classes, should have deemed it wise to inform me of the presence of this to me invisible stranger, and have gone to the extent of recommending an introduction, was enough for me—Minerva always has a valid reason for everything she does, and as she is my instructor so it is my duty to comply with her wishes.

Individually I am accustomed to spirits of low degree constantly worrying me in every imaginable way with their nonsense or evil suggestions. Some even go so far as to plead with me to do certain stated things to help them out of the spiritual toils in which they find themselves ensnared—to repair various false steps which they have taken when upon the earth, and which they now wish they could redeem. But so many are the ways they have of approaching me that it requires constant watchfulness on my part to guard against annoyance occasioned by their persistent attempts at obtrusion. They literally follow me all the time ; but to each and every one of them I give the same unsympathetic and peremptory order to return to their abode ; for it is certain that none but worthless spirits would push themselves foremost in my mind whilst it is concentrated upon my daily work. I had also been carefully instructed to prevent them from communicating in any form or shape.

This wholesome advice it was almost impossible to follow, for it was when my brain was otherwise deeply occupied that these sudden, forced impressions of all kinds were rushed in upon it. These irrepressible intruders frequently endeavoured to personate even those spirits whom I could instantly determine by the feeling they imparted to my brain, and with whom in my leisure I occasionally conversed, even when they themselves were present. Of course the personation was but momentary, then their power failed them, or their false pretensions were found out by my brain, so that every attempt of this kind always ended in the total collapse of the intruder.

Upon this somewhat important occasion—important

in its results—I was satisfied that the spirit referred to by Minerva, was not of the common earthbound or frivolous class ; indeed, so strong was this presentiment that I requested Minerva to act as interpreter, and translate the answers given by this spiritual stranger to any mental questions which I might put to her. To this she agreed.

As the result of a short interview with this newcomer on the scene I was informed that her earthly name had been “Marian,” and that her life in the spiritworld as yet had been but short, still, sufficiently long for her to have lost all knowledge of time. Her abode, she stated, was the Second Sphere, but as yet no mission had been given her to work beyond the fact that she possessed the instructive desire to wander about in search of a certain person upon earth, that she was happiest when seeking for this individual, that she seldom had any respite from her wanderings, and that she had met none in whom she could find interest until she had discovered myself. No explanation was forthcoming to account for this strange proclivity, save that she was happiest when with me, even more so than when in her sphere.

Despite the interesting nature of this interview I soon banished all thoughts of this new spiritual acquaintance from my mind, and closely confined my attention, spiritually, to a continuation of my work with Minerva.

At night, before going to sleep, Minerva was in the habit of visiting me and explaining what she purposed writing about the next day, for when I knew the essence of what she intended to reveal, it both assisted her as well as somewhat relieved the strain upon my brain. Indeed, I looked upon these night interviews as part of my duty, hence I exerted all my power to imprint her remarks upon my mind in as clear a light as possible, or in other words, I endeavoured definitely to fathom the nature of the information she was about to communicate, so that my next day's writing would be more easy.

It was after one of these instructive conversations,

when Minerva was dwelling upon earthly topics, that she again referred to this determined stranger. On this occasion I was informed that she had expressed a strong desire to converse with me direct, without the interposition of Minerva. My curiosity to know something more definite about her was thus considerably aroused, for the observations which she had made when I had previously interviewed her were certainly interesting, and they almost convinced me that there must be some reason why she so persistently pressed her acquaintanceship upon me ; but, then, as she could not give any explanation whatever upon this point, how was I to satisfy myself ?

I now put numerous questions to her, and soon realised that she was very pleasant to converse with. Also, it was easy to gather from her remarks that her condition was one of happiness, and that she was somewhat girlish in her ways, full of fun, and of an active disposition.

She informed me that with my consent it was her intention to remain with me for several reasons, or as the current of information literally translated—"would I mentally consent and agree with myself that she was present when I felt her ?" This peculiar yet important consent, more in keeping with spiritual beings than earthly, and so beyond a definite explanation in words, I immediately gave, being exceptionally interested in her. Besides, it was almost incumbent upon me to give my sanction, from the very friendly disposition which Minerva had exhibited towards her.

She intimated that it would give her great pleasure to do any little act to establish my confidence in her,—but I had nothing in which a spirit could help me, save occasionally to find out various things that concerned me in my daily life. As she had no mission to perform her power was consequently very limited, so that I could not expect very much.

Thus my interest in her greatly increased, and I determined to test her more severely. I requested her on different occasions to find out certain events, conditions,

and various items of news which were in a sense of importance to me, hence I could get the connection. The answers she gave were sometimes correct ; again, frequently she could not find out anything, and occasionally she got mixed up in persons, thoughts, conditions, and places. This clearly was quite satisfactory, for I was well aware that a spirit in her position was a very weak power indeed, hence I could expect but little as the result of her efforts. She was but a new-born spirit, still more or less interested in mankind and earthly affairs. Power was a property which as yet she possessed in a very minor degree, for she had no duty to perform that demanded power. Again, the solutions of the numerous mysteries of the material world were yet practically unknown to her, for certainly she had not so far had any experience with the complicated existence of mankind.

At this stage of our acquaintanceship she very frequently at nights conversed with me upon unimportant topics—very different from the precise business talks I held with Minerva. With the latter there was no levity, no unnecessary remarks ; all communications were of a serious nature, and her explanations were clear, precise, and unmistakable, both from her own advanced standpoint as well as from a human aspect. These talks I ever looked upon as duty, therefore I was always careful to be precisely clear upon the meaning of all her observations. It was indeed a change for me to converse with my new companion upon light topics, where there was no necessity for concentrated attention—dialogues after which I could sleep.

About this time my person was saturated with the presence of evil and frivolous spirits, whom I bit at, as it were, whenever I got the chance, but was powerless to force away. They were a constant nuisance to me by the way in which they would persistently impress me with all kinds of ideas, some of which I candidly admit were correct, but for the most part they were altogether fictitious ; still, I did my best to take no notice of them.

They worried me to the limit of endurance ; they tempted me incessantly, for my brain, being now developed and educated to communion with spirits, thus attracted their attention, and aroused their desires for self-gratification of all kinds. In my own weakness I tried to conquer them, but always had to succumb, for the strain was both unbearable and unceasing.

Minerva had at this time finished her first work and seldom visited me ; still, my new spiritual friend constantly urged me to oppose these influences with all the determination at my command ; and many a time I promised to do so, and fully intended to make the effort permanent, but, somehow, it always terminated in the same result. At times I withstood their attacks longer than at others, but after several days' firm resistance, I was invariably compelled to take a rest from the strain, which only encouraged my tormentors on with greater zest. Eventually, after carrying on this unequal combat for a considerable time, I ceased all spiritual communications, save an occasional conversation with my companion, and earthly interests occupied my entire attention, greatly to my own benefit, for then frivolous spirits did not trouble me so much.

In the beginning of the year 1900, Minerva returned, and stated her intention to write another work—"God and His Universe." Thus the channel of communication was again opened, and these spirits, quite naturally, returned stronger and more delighted than ever in their torture. At once it became evident to myself that I should suffer great distress if my work with Minerva was to be continued, and if these spirits were going to annoy me again, probably worse than ever. Minerva had even clearly stated that she had no power over my actions and feelings beyond her mission's requirements, hence she could not help me in this matter, not even when I was in direct communication with her, but at such times they certainly were less persistent.

Eventually I came to the conclusion that without

assistance it would be impossible for me to overcome them, so I prayed for help. The answer to my prayer was revealed to me, and I was to be allowed aid sufficient to enable me to fight against them on equal terms—that is, my spiritual helper should be given sufficient power upon each occasion to counterbalance exactly the influence brought to bear upon me by frivolous spirits; but, at the same time, I was informed that I had my earthly duties to perform, therefore had to decide upon what course I intended to take.

Some few nights later my spiritual companion informed me that she had been promoted into the Third Sphere. She had frequently expressed the desire to have a mission in connection with myself, but neither she nor I could see that there was any likelihood of her getting one.

Not many days after her advance into this sphere, she came to me in great glee, and informed me that she had received a small mission directly relative to myself, though, for some reason best known to herself, she would not then disclose the nature of it. I gathered, however, that she had been commissioned to help me, so that I might be able to interpret the information received from Minerva, in a fashion consistent with my material properties, without interruption from evil and frivolous spirits. This I soon found out to be the case, for I could now resist my tormentors more firmly, and with less mental strain; nevertheless, they were persistently prominent.

My instructor, Minerva, expressed great satisfaction at the manifest way in which I was breaking down obstruction from these obtruding spirits. Nor was she slow to realise that she had a more pliable subject to deal with, for now my attention was more exclusively centred upon her work than had been possible in the past. It is not too much to say that this additional assistance allowed me was absolutely necessary, for it was becoming quite impossible to discharge my abstruse spiritual duties properly under the previous conditions; now, however, I missed few or no opportunities of repelling their attacks.

The business of translating Minerva's second work, from highly refined and abstruse electric currents into written language, was a much more trying operation than the previous one. The mental exhaustion was intense, so that, frequently after finishing the day's writing, my head ached so severely that I could not see. I felt that the severe effort of mental concentration which I was compelled to make was gradually undermining my health ; still, I derived great comfort and support from the kind and sympathetic words of my companion, Marian.

Each night Minerva carefully instructed me upon the next day's work, and when she was finished, Marian, so it seemed, soothed me to a condition of sleep. After a few days' mental tension with the former I was compelled to change off to several days' physical work upon the ranch ; thus I was refreshed, and ready with renewed mental vigour to write again.

When not in business communication with me, Minerva always retired to her sphere, in order to free me from the influence of her intense power, so that when she returned, my brain had become revived, and thus was more susceptible to her promptings. The very idea of showing the white feather never entered my mind ; indeed, I was as determined as Minerva to finish the work though it ruined my health, knowing full well that I was in powerful hands, and engaged in a noble undertaking.

Upon one occasion, when under this strain, I was compelled to stop writing for the common reason of a headache coming on, which slowly dimmed my vision until all objects appeared dark and quivering. On such occasions I invariably took a walk in the cold, open air, for it was winter-time, and the snow was frozen and powdery. The headache from which I was suffering gradually increased until I could not see anything. I felt ill and miserable to the last degree—a condition rare in my constitution. The work upon which I was engaged was an unnatural strain upon a material brain. Eventu-

ally, not being able to stand up any longer, I laid down upon the snow and buried my head in it, if possible to obtain relief. This revived me somewhat, so that I got up and made towards a haystack, from which my brothers were feeding the stock. I crawled up to the stack, and threw myself down upon the hay, sick with the intensity of the pain. My companion then came and soothed me to a great degree of comfort, so that soon I fell asleep, and thus rested my angry brain. When I awoke my condition in all respects was considerably improved, and I walked home on the snow-road much refreshed.

Such as the above experience were my feelings during all the time that I was engaged upon this remarkable business, on a larger or smaller scale, according to the mental pressure I was submitted to, so that I was not sorry when Minerva informed me that for the present her work was done, but that at some future date she would revise it again once or twice upon a larger scale.

By this time my companion and myself had reduced the number and influence of these worthless spirits to such a degree that I was practically not troubled at all by them. Minerva, having finished her work with me for the present, returned to her sphere, and only occasionally came and conversed with me, so that I was free at night to talk with my spiritual assistant, Marian. Soon, however, my thoughts, ambitions, and desires returned to my material occupation, for I was daily working at and interesting myself in it. All consideration of the treatise I had been writing was apparently pushed to the background, and idle spirits slowly but surely gained their ascendancy again, for now I was less upon my guard, until I was practically in the same position as a year ago. The power with which Marian was endowed gradually dimmed down until she could scarcely commune with me at all. I saw clearly what was coming, but had not courage enough manfully to resist it, although at various times I certainly did make an effort—but to no purpose.

At last, the conclusion forced itself upon my mind that

there must be a definite reason why these degraded spirits were allowed to annoy me so persistently, for I did not consider that it was altogether due to any weakness on my part.

Again I struggled to resist them from time to time, until one day—some six months after Minerva's departure—I determined to conquer at any price. Unswervingly I fought against their aggressive influences to the best of my ability, for still I was quite unassisted by Marian, whose power had now probably diminished to what it originally was when she was admitted into the Third Sphere, for the mission she had been given, to help me in resisting frivolous and evil spirits, was to last only so long as my work with Minerva continued.

Some days after I had finally determined to master these spirits, Marian told me that she had good news to report, that her power had returned even greater than before, for she stated that I had fought as well as circumstances and conditions would allow, therefore assistance had been granted me through her.

It was extremely pleasing to me to be apprised of this, for in my true self I was literally ashamed at being the butt of such influences, yet was totally helpless against them. Even after I earnestly endeavoured to overcome them still they got the upperhand over me, in spite of my will-power and perseverance.

It was a very peculiar feeling to have some evil or frivolous spirit with his stupid promptings incessantly predominant in one's brain ; but gradually, from the date upon which I was assisted to vanquish them, their power declined, and the effort required in each individual case was not nearly so great as it had previously been, until eventually, to my satisfaction, I could not feel any of them around. This astonished me considerably, for I was too ignorant of the real properties of the spiritual condition to be able adequately to appreciate the value of the aid rendered me, hence was unable to account for this remarkable change for the better.

Naturally, I asked Marian for an explanation of this sudden cessation of hostilities, but she could only assure me that I was now free from all adverse influences, save an occasional sporadic visitation which everybody is liable to. She herself was much more powerful than she had been heretofore, and very clear in her answers ; she was also happy beyond measure, because through her instrumentality I was no longer under degenerate spiritual pressure. The reason why this remarkable change had been permitted she did not then explain, for she was alone instructed in what her duty was, and the power allowed her was solely to discharge that duty.

“ You have fought well,” she subsequently observed, “ and amply deserve this reward. The reason why these spirits were allowed a free hand, will, in the near future, be manifest to you, but it is beyond my province to dilate upon it directly. I am not allowed to see what is in store for you beyond a few conditions and some trifling events. You must follow your own path, for you are a free agent. What you will pass through in the near future interests you alone in the passing ; but remember that I also accompany you in your journeys, so in like manner events are interesting to me only as they become the present, for it is not so much the events themselves, as the details associated with them, which will interest you, hence myself. I am as yourself, for my mission is now in another direction, one even nearer to your feelings than the last. You have to become a celebrated man, important in the eyes of the world, for your duty is to enlighten man upon the region of spirits in their many conditions and powers. Your work now is no longer to learn from an earthly standpoint anything more about spirits, for you will know them as they themselves really are in their own abodes. You have now overcome their influence, hence in your future work you will be proof against their attacks in multitudes. You have now attained to a condition as it were beyond their intrusion, inasmuch as you, in your naturally limited mental powers

—especially as regards trespassing by spirits upon your brain—have reached a level from which you are able without effort to will them away, in fact, any and all intruders. In other words, you have conquered them, and so prevented them from annoying you in your future work ; still, they will without doubt attempt to influence you just as they do other men all the world over.”

This was indeed strange information to hear ; for they had troubled me up to a certain point, from which they had slowly receded, and latterly the strain also had been decidedly easier to bear.

Undoubtedly there must have been some superior power present with me that drove these worthless spirits away, for I could not possibly have done it myself. To a certain extent I might have guarded against their actually talking, but not allowing them to make the attempt to do so is another matter altogether, and one which I most certainly could not have accomplished. No, Marian must be the one to whom the credit is due for this act of compassion !

After this we had many interesting conversations together, yet none were of a nature beyond what ordinary conversation between two such dissimilar existing conditions entails. She had neither the knowledge nor the power that Minerva possessed. She could not even explain anything concerning her own spiritual abode beyond what I myself knew. In this direction she was quite unable to satisfy my curiosity. Her present duty had its clearly defined limits, and no faithful, progressing spirit ever oversteps such limits.

Clarissa also occasionally conversed with me in her own pronounced style. She knew every condition and every event both in the present, as well as in the near future, as far as these workings were concerned. She was very powerful, but of a distinct personality even for one of her exalted position. Her disposition was a difficult one to understand, and she went about her work in a way peculiar to herself. I considered it a privilege to talk with her

upon any occasion, and in the past we have had many conversations together. She was then full of fun, and ever fond of lowering me in my own estimation ; but now that her mission is nearing its end she is serious, and even mysterious in her ways.

My thoughts about this time were constantly aroused to a spiritual view of earthly affairs. I could see things in a new light altogether, and this change in my mental properties troubled me not a little, for my own personal interests were then centred upon my earthly business. At times I considered such ideas as being detrimental to my material prosperity, but soon I came to regard this latter as of little or no importance, and everything that I did appeared to me as not worth the time expended upon it. I looked upon work from what was to me a new standpoint altogether—as a factor in the world's progress. I could see how each man's work was a mere cipher to the whole world's work, yet how each man was doing his duty to support others ; how each person's labour was necessary in a small degree to maintain others ; how each individual in his own personal interest, and in his duty, was helping the world to progress, and how all these minute supporters were instinctively supporting themselves. I could see the world in a degraded yet businesslike aspect. How truly insignificant man appeared !—each in his own small way ; and how spirits of higher degree overruled ridiculously ignorant humanity, and how evil spirits in their peculiarly miserable fashion were also doing their work. All were occupied in their own private interests, and how hopelessly the mass clashed one against another, still, all were busy. The advanced ones dictated to the less privileged ones all through, and there was constantly a mighty throng slowly but surely working against all odds, and advancing gradually but steadily upwards and onwards, beyond the entanglement, to the resting-place where the Mighty King governs this mighty throng. He, in His Supreme Power, knows each individual one of this throng, and supervises their progress

if they be worthy ; if not, how He controls them, and allows them to occupy their time as their interests lead them ! How, despite all this maze of differences, and confusion of interests, all in their respective stages are equal, and no one has a better chance of heaven than another !

Strange ideas, of which the above is but a sample, surged up in my mind, and I could not rest satisfied, for it was all new to me. Enthusiastic business interests almost imperceptibly calmed down to mere selfish ends. The spiritworld I thought about in practically the same way as the earthly world, for, somehow, I took the view of an onlooker to both—each in its own peculiar way shrouded in mystery.

The mysteries of the spiritworld were to me those of an advanced and superior condition of powers and existences. Nor yet can it be denied that such of them as I could grasp certainly failed to arouse my curiosity like those of the material world ; still, somehow, I seemed perfectly content with what little I did know. Earthly mysteries, on the other hand, in their dense, shady way, excited my deepest curiosity, and thus I puzzled with myself on certain points which until recently I never even knew about. Suddenly I would know the answers to my complex thoughts—so simple at times that I wondered at my own extreme ignorance—yet they were upon subjects referred to in certain printed articles, and generally recognised as great mysteries. This change, which slowly but unmistakably came over me, was now as natural as my thoughts were years ago. I could distinctly detect it making headway, and often wondered when and where it would end. At times I was subject to these wandering obscure thoughts more than at others, and frequently I rebelled against them, and tried to think of mundane affairs. Again, sometimes I would be interested in certain musings of my mind, and could not distract my attention therefrom. It would revert to its previous occupation in spite of my efforts to the contrary.

All this toned me down from the settled expectations I entertained of a prosperous future in the business in which I was interested. The castles in the air were swept away from my visionary horizon, and subjects entailing great mysteries floated before my mind, sadly against my youthful highest aspirations. At times I would commune with my companion, Marian, upon topics of interest, and at others merely carry on a general conversation upon my condition and progress.

On one occasion, in particular, Clarissa came to me in a very serious mood, and dwelt upon the importance and intricate nature of the mission upon which she was then occupied. She very lucidly explained to me how she had control over many people on earth, and had a vast number of spirits engaged working out her ends, as well as what the result of her complicated labours would be to those directly concerned by them. Her power and knowledge, forethought and planning, must have been enormously beyond comparison with those possessed by man. She was advanced far beyond all those who were under her supervision, while all men, to a certain extent, are on an equal basis one with another.

Minerva seldom visited me that I was aware of. She said that as I was her subject and pupil so was she developing me in certain new directions, although I rarely knew of her presence. Without doubt I was changing in many respects, but the development was so gradual as to be immediately inappreciable. On one occasion she informed me that she was going to develop my mental vision properties, so of course I naturally expected to see something abnormal that night, but not so. At times since I have seen bright lights, in fact, nearly every night, but I take not the slightest notice of them. Again, I frequently see as it were pictures of people, scenery, and events floating in front of my mental vision, changing repeatedly to something new, and lasting a considerable time. But, somehow, dealings with spirits and their works do not impress the material brain as forcibly as

earthly sights and communications ; still, the remembrance of events comes to the front with astonishing ease, and with after-thought they appear more wonderful and more unnatural than ever.

It is not human instinct for man at present to communicate with any power or existence beyond that natural to matter ; so then the delicate connection between spirits and the human brain cannot be expected to impress the latter with equal firmness and satisfaction as the well-developed connection between man and man.

Further, those hitherto dormant and uneducated higher senses which are brought into action when dealing with supernatural conditions—those powers exercised by man in his communications with spirits—naturally impress the inferior with an inexplicable and very emphatic idea of the advanced nature of the unseen spiritual existence. These new impressions of a recently discovered condition at the time appear delicate rather than strong, but with after consideration they are found to contain many times more volume in their meaning than those obtained from material sources. In the latter there is lacking that ring of depth, power, and emphasis which is so pronounced in the former. There certainly is not much bodily satisfaction when conversing with spirits, for all one's energies must be concentrated in that of strict attention, therefore one must be in the right frame of mind, then one will be much interested in this novel method of intercommunication, especially when receiving electric answers of superfine meaning.

The brain is material and often rebels, and frivolous spirits frequently rush to the front some thought of earthly things if for a moment one relaxes one's mental forces upon the spirit conversing, hence it is no light undertaking, for success can only be obtained under the above conditions.

All spirits are not equally powerful to commune. Minerva, for instance, can talk all night and compel me to listen and interest myself in her remarks ; while, on

the other hand, I have conversed with spirits who could barely convey the slightest current. This latter class I avoid, for communing with them is injurious to the imperfectly developed sensitive powers, and gives me a peculiar strained, dazed feeling in my head, almost beyond my power of endurance. This sensation is produced by the lack of interest, knowledge, or power on the part of the spirit to commune properly. Points such as the above I know well for I have experienced them, and have been informed of the reasons.

I was led on very slowly but very surely ; my knowledge increased also according to the experiences I underwent. I cannot say that I was anxious to progress very quickly, for it took me all my time to satisfy myself with and become accustomed to my advancement before some fresh, unlooked for turn took place. Such ever came with regular persistency. What would happen next was always a source of speculation to me, and as a matter of habit I used to imagine something, but never was I correct in my surmise. If my curiosity prompted me to interrogate Marian on the subject I was always kindly assured that nothing harmful would happen to me, but I never even had a thought of such a thing, for my confidence in my instructors was steadily becoming stronger. I was ever informed that the present was sufficient for me to trouble myself about—and so it was. In a measure I was bewildered, for many incidents happened, small in their way, but sufficiently pronounced to make me feel that I was not my own master.

One night, whilst I was conversing with Marian upon the above line of thought, and was being confidently assured by her that my progress in spiritual knowledge was very satisfactory, she suddenly observed : “ Minerva is here, and wishes to speak to you.”

“ Very well,” I replied.

My companion then added : “ Minerva has something to say to you which she will not allow me to know anything about, therefore she has instructed me to return

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to my sphere for the present, until she has disburdened her mind to you."

This information puzzled me considerably. It then flashed through my brain that some new departure was about to be announced; and what alarmed me most was the fear that my spiritual associate was about to be taken away from me, but such a thing, she assured me, could not be done, for her mission with me was not yet by any means completed.

Minerva then informed me that what she was about to request me to do would redound to my credit; that it was a very important part of her mission, and essentially to benefit the human race.

"I am your old friend," she began, "and wish you nothing but good. Duty sometimes is a hard mistress to obey, but duty leads to eternal happiness. At present I am busy developing your higher mental and spiritual properties; the progress is slow but sure."

I then observed that she was progressing quite fast enough for me.

"My boy," she resumed, "you have to reach a certain condition of development, and the sooner you arrive at it the sooner will the strain and trial be over. You are improving to my entire satisfaction, but as a matter of fact you have not yet begun your work, and here you are talking of imaginary conditions in yourself. You must take everything calmly, and do your duty. It is not for your own personal benefit that you are being called upon to undergo an entirely new experience, but to enlighten those who are in darkness. It is the crowning work of your life, therefore utilise your powers and do it well, then you will be rewarded. You began your advance from an equality with all men—now think of your knowledge upon occult matters, of your fast-developing properties! Think of the benefits you are privileged with!—you have your own free will, and whether you exert your energy or not, is your own doing. But, there, my boy! I know you as you truly are in your inmost self. I recog-

nise that you are working to the best advantage ; but now I have other duties for you to perform, more difficult than any you have yet undertaken ; however, they entail great satisfaction—are you willing to begin them in earnest, for I tell you they will require great concentration of your advanced powers ? ”

“ I shall endeavour to do my duty to the best of my ability,” was my reply. “ I work manually all day, and rest by working spiritually.”

“ Your manual work will soon be over, but then that does not prevent you from working spiritually before sleeping. You must do your duty as it is measured out to you ! ”

“ That is all right !—what am I to begin now ? ”

“ It is now your duty to learn further concerning the spiritworld.”

More than this she would not tell me, observing that I had better remain in ignorance until the time appointed arrived. She then continued :

“ You must not inform your companion of the nature of my present remarks. She herself shall instruct you, although such is my duty. I will explain to her the nature of her work, for she knows you better than I do. She is also more adapted to accomplish the ends I have in view, for being more intimately acquainted with you she will naturally gain your sympathy better. Again, she is more your equal, inasmuch as she is in a lower sphere than myself.”

I then asked Minerva how I could possibly keep this information from Marian, for she was able to read my mind, my thoughts, as at all times I had difficulty in keeping a secret.

“ Ah ! ” she replied. “ I have never yet asked you to do that which is impossible, and I shall never make such an absurd request. I know my business, and shall prevent her from reading your mind, but I cannot hinder you from speaking about it—you are your own master ! ”

After the above conversation she departed. This all

seemed rather strange to me—why make a secret of what my future work was to be?—why refer to the subject at all? On previous occasions I had not known beforehand—but no doubt Minerva, in the knowledge of her mission's requirements, had some definite reason, as in the past she always had.

Well, it appeared that there had to be a kind of secret about it, at any rate! Somehow, I had a strong suspicion that Minerva might possibly tell Marian something further about this business, and when she returned my curiosity almost prompted me to ask her, but I did not.

Strange to say, Marian in a few days became considerably more powerful, and could converse with greater emphasis. She no longer allowed me to talk "rubbish," as Minerva styled our usual conversations, but I could see no "rubbish" in any of our remarks, for I was in earnest in everything I did and said spiritually.

CHAPTER II

ACROSS THE STREAM

"Now, Norman, you must listen to me seriously!" began Marian. "However, I am not going to talk with you here, but in spirit-land, for there I can explain better."

I took this startling information quite as a matter of course, and simply inquired how I was going to get there.

"Concentrate all your efforts to my side. You can always tell where I am, so just will your double close beside me. I have power to help you—now try."

I made the attempt in a clumsy fashion, no doubt, for I felt remarkably out of place and awkward. I certainly expected to find my entire soul leave my body, but no, as it seemed only part of my true self went, for I was partially present in both places.

"Now, Fair Sir, you are in the region beyond the earthly confinement—welcome here! This, you know, is your first visit among the souls of departed men."

This little speech I heard (felt) in my earthly brain, while my power and interests were strongly concentrated at Marian's side. I wanted very much to reply to this courteous greeting, but did not know how; besides, I was exerting all my attention to keep my position near her.

"You must just listen to me and exert your power," she continued. "Now look at me yourself—I bow to you. Ah! you only imagine that you see me. I am in touch with your brain, therefore I know what your thoughts are now! In time you shall see clearly, but at present

you are as a babe just born, and are quite undeveloped. Look ! you are away from your body, still it is quite alive. It is your double that is here, and your powers are concentrated in your double ! You are under the impression that you see two figures instead of one, but you must remember that the properties at present in use are quite new to you. Now look around and tell me what you see ? Ah ! you are not really certain that you do see anything ? ”

Here she stretched forth her arm and pointed towards something. In my brain there was a dim vision of her, or, rather, I should say a very strong impression. I could see that hand, in its grace, point while she said : “ Look there, Fair Sir !—those spirits !—some laughing, some jeering, and some only staring curiously at us !—look at their delight and amazement !—look at those miserable, dark fiends, haggard and anxious, yet at present amused—look at them ! Not one dare advance towards your body ! Oh, how they would now delight in torturing you—but not one dare, not one can ! ”

“ Behold ! ” She waved her shapely arm, as it appeared to me, and instantly they vanished all. At least, I knew that they had vanished rather than that I saw them go. They were more felt by me than seen, for the vision that I had of them in my brain was very vague. My double saw them clearly, no doubt, but the connection between my free double and my material brain was slight. However, the feeling of spirits in their power was not new to my brain, hence I felt them better than I saw them. There was no doubt in my mind that they vanished, for there was a marked difference in my feelings after they had gone.

“ Ah ! I perceive you but indistinctly see that we are not now standing upon anything material. See ! there is nothing beneath us, nothing above us, nothing on any side—we are poised in space ! Your present existing qualities are not bound to matter ; you are free for the moment, nevertheless, you must return. Allow me

briefly to picture ourselves to your brain?—it will help it in its connection with its spiritual vision properties. We are in space!—you know that; you can feel; you can vaguely see? I myself stand by your side!—you are the taller of the two!—and now I bow to you! But come, let us go elsewhere!” And thus she talked with me, but upon what topic I cannot now exactly remember, for the impression was not perfectly conveyed to my brain. Presently, I could remain no longer, and was drawn back to the earth, sadly against my will, for the bodily power, which subjects me to its laws, overcame all my efforts to remain in the spiritworld.

The sensation I experienced, when completely my material self again, is beyond explanation. A feeling of subjection, heaviness, loneliness, and activity came over me; nevertheless, I was greatly relieved for the tension had been terrible. I at once felt a reaction taking place in my brain, resulting from undue pressure upon undeveloped nerve-centres. My mind mechanically repeated the events as they happened, in a mixed-up fashion—but it was the sensation of existing in space that thrilled me most! When there I felt quite at home, but when I returned to the material condition it seemed difficult to convince myself that I had been free in eternal space and seen for myself.

There was a clash in my brain between earthly ideas, which were strong, and the knowledge of what I had seen spiritually in a clear but delicate fashion. Two distinct impressions of my visit in one brain, either of which I could recall to the front, but how the other rebelled.

“Norman,” my companion remarked, “you have done well for the first attempt. In a short time you will be less subject to a reaction, for what you have just undergone has been a severe and unnatural strain upon certain brain-centres hitherto dormant. Your power will gradually increase with practice. You have still much to see and learn, much to undergo, and many will be the conflicts in your inmost self—the natural against the supernatural.”

Jan 13, 1953 - This too in with recent paper in diary
that vivid daydreams are
Astrally projected Voyages

Thus she talked with me, and explained many points which required elucidating so as to make my next attempt less exhausting. Notwithstanding the remarkable nature of my late experience, still, somehow, I did not feel unduly excited that night, and as everything had passed off most satisfactorily so I was led to anticipate that the future would not be so very difficult after all; however, I am wiser now, having learned from severe experience that great determination and many repeated attempts would be required before I could achieve much in my immaterial explorations.

It was difficult to realise that I myself had been in the spiritworld, that I had vaguely seen what is not natural for man to behold, that I had practically been in two separate places at one time, yet each part was alive in its way. My material body, to which the soul is bound, naturally was the means by which I knew and saw what I did, but all efforts of my personal presence (spiritual power working the nervous system) were concentrated in my double. Any noise that my material brain heard, instantly drew back my attention to the earthly condition, hence it required a great effort to overcome the strong attraction of the bodily powers. It was will-power alone that overcame the natural laws governing the dual condition of body and soul.

Next day, at odd times, I thought over my experiences, and fully realised that numerous expeditions must yet be in store for me before this wonderful spiritworld could be even superficially investigated. I knew that I was privileged—if privileged it may be called—with an object in view, but what the ultimate result would be was beyond me even to speculate upon. I could see great explorations before my companion and myself, and fully recognised that my powers would have to be greatly developed before I could obtain complete satisfaction from my journeys. My experiences were evidently to be of a type which would supply man with fresh material for thought, for in the past he has been purposely kept almost entirely

in the dark about supernatural powers ; and properties were being developed in me unconceived of before.

What was I, with my insignificant brain, going to do and learn in this region of great mysteries ? How could I ever fathom even the mysteries in connection with myself ? Of course, I knew that my companion would instruct me as best she could under the circumstances, but I was material and dense, accustomed to mundane limited conditions, and my brain was of substance, hence confined to the limits of that substance. How was material to understand what was utterly beyond it ?—for the spiritual condition is in every respect beyond the material.

Such thoughts as the above passed through my mind, yet I instinctively knew that what it was my duty to learn would be within the range of my powers to grasp. It could not be otherwise and be consistent with reason and common sense. I also knew that I should always be led by one who was kind and loving, by one who knew me almost better than I knew myself.

Next night, as I expected, Minerva visited me, merely observing that she would converse with me on business matters in the spiritworld, not where I then was, adding : “ You have advanced a stage, therefore you must follow it up point by point.”

On this occasion, somehow, I was not in the best of conditions to undertake the venture, still I forced myself into the idea that such was my duty, hence I overcame the depressing influence so strongly felt—probably the influence of some interfering spirit.

“ Now, Norman,” my companion remarked, “ you must again join us in our immaterial world. You must exercise all your will-power, for the better you concentrate your entire presence the greater satisfaction will you derive. You need not in the least be afraid of anything.”

“ No,” I replied. “ It is not a question of being afraid of anything now—I have passed that stage. With you by my side I fear nothing.”

“In that you are correct ! I did not intend to imply that you were actually afraid to renew the attempt, but you are ashamed as it were of your experiences—is that not the case ? You keep them all secret from everybody, when there is no need whatever for doing so, for in time you must write them all down, as they are not for your own personal benefit. I am fully aware that it is your disposition which makes you so reticent ; but, there ! I shall draw you from your shell before long, even in spite of your will, for I have your own good at heart—but, come, let us converse in the spiritworld, it is better ! ”

I then threw myself as best I could into a spiritual condition. Marian, I knew, was near me, for I could feel her upon my right side.

“Now you are in this world once more ! Welcome here again, Fair Sir ! I am at your command ; bid me explain anything you wish to know. Ah, I see you are afraid to speak !—you don’t know how ?—it will come naturally if you make the attempt—now begin.”

I tried, but knew of nothing to say. Somehow, I felt a peculiar sensation run through my brain—a faint feeling unknown to myself—and I knew that I had said something very awkwardly, and not altogether what I should have liked to say. It was : “Right glad am I to be here with you again.”

I cannot explain how it was done further than that it was in response to a wish, but I knew that it was done, and has continually been done since. But now I can talk and say what I mean as nearly as can be expected, considering that the language in vogue is one of electric currents and quite new to man.

“Well, now,” she said, “you see you do not know your own power until you try. I knew that you could do it if you made the attempt. Glance around ! you are again floating in space—space beneath and above us. But look here ! there is something near us, though, which is not clear space,—it is the condition whereon your body

labours ; it is that out of which your body is composed. Come, let us examine it ! ”

At this remark I exerted my utmost power to see mother earth. Then Marian, stretching forth her hand towards something, as I indistinctly saw, observed : “ That is the property which limits you to earthly conditions. Ah ! I perceive that you fail to recognise it as you expected, but you can feel its presence and whereabouts. In time, Fair Sir, you shall see better, you are only very imperfectly developed as yet.”

If ever I tried to bring into exercise my entire power it was then, to behold my own body, but I could not see its shape, only a condition that impressed me indefinitely that some power was near me, but I knew not of what. Indeed, I am not altogether sure that I could have seen my body in outline for it was in bed, and covered, where no distinct figure is recognisable, at any rate, by natural means. Again, I saw through spiritual undeveloped eyes, quite new to me, but as a matter of fact there was practically nothing visible to satisfy me that it was my own body ; still, I knew that it was my body, from my feelings, as well as for the reason that I had been told it was. Had I been left to myself, however, I could not have distinguished by any means, that it was my body, for I was not yet able to see or feel anything that was not pointed out to me as existing. This was only what was to be expected when the nature of my condition is understood, for I was but a new arrival and almost powerless. Upon earth men have standard powers which are allowed as a standard basis, and these powers do not develop themselves to any appreciable degree, but remain throughout life practically the same as they are given. Here, however, I had to develop my powers, as it were, solely from the power to develop them, but it is difficult to explain to man that which is beyond natural endowment, and which he has never experienced himself.

Almost immediately after the foregoing conversation with Marian I was compelled to return to my body ; it

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Most made
up stories
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was impossible any longer to resist the power of attraction which it possessed.

Marian also returned with me, and stated that I had done well ; but individually I was not satisfied, for I was determined to see clearly such conditions and objects as were pointed out as being in front of me. At present, however, I have only vision enough to arouse my curiosity, and nothing more.

"We must make another attempt to see more of this new world," Marian forthwith observed. So after a short rest I renewed the venture, and with a better result this time.

"Now, my loyal comrade !" were the words with which she greeted me on my return to the spiritworld. "You are here once again—but let us move away from these surroundings to clear space, where none can trouble us with their baneful influences."

We ascended, but how or whither I know not. Certain it is that we arrived at a region in space free from currents and influences of all kinds, for here I was more at ease, and the strain upon my body was less severe. While we thus stood or floated—whichever it was—she conversed with me until Minerva arrived.

"Look there !" Marian suddenly exclaimed. "Something very powerful is coming ; you can vaguely see—ah, now you feel Minerva's presence !" and certainly I did.

"Welcome to this advanced world, my fair subject !" Minerva then began. "You are progressing to my entire satisfaction, and, I trust, to your own. Continue your efforts, for such is your duty. You are happy here—are you not ?—happier than ever you were while in the flesh ?"

"Yes," I replied, "if my body would not so persistently draw back my attention, and require me to exercise such an effort. I am happy, but clean out of my element."

"Yes ; but to develop anything in your material bodies ...

requires effort and persistency, according to the magnitude of the task ; but if the will and interest be centred in the work then the battle is half won. Your interest as well as will-power is concentrated upon developing your remarkable properties, therefore you have but the development to overcome, for such is contrary to Nature's powers in your brain—it is termed supernatural in human language. You see for yourself that it lies within your power to develop your gift, such is your duty, so persevere to the best of your ability, for you have much to gain by so doing. You have a beautiful and loving companion to help you in your struggles."

Such was the strain in which we communed, but in my material body I was in a terrible state of exhaustion. However, as my interest was alone with my double, so I felt that for once I would bring my body under spiritual subjection ; still, in spite of my determination, the struggle was slowly but certainly exhausting my presence away back to my body. Times again, with an effort, I would concentrate my attention into my double, but it would always slowly return, until at last it would not answer at all by increase of presence in my double. Marian was fully aware of the conflict that was being waged between my respective bodies, and said : " You must now return ; the effort is telling upon your body, so let us go back," and accordingly we returned.

When completely myself again I inhaled a long and deep breath of relief, then jumped out of bed in a terrible state of perspiration, caused by the severe exhaustion to which my body had been subjected.

This time I was in a measure angry with my material self, but soon cooled down to a melancholy state of mind. I longed to overcome my body's attractive power and exist free from bondage, but I could not. I was thoroughly upset mentally when I thought of the change, from a condition of peace, love, and contentment, to that in the body with its heavy, clumsy, depressing qualities—qualities of incessant mental worry and physical exertion

were indeed a contrast to the happiness and harmony I had just experienced ! I was soothed by my companion frequently reminding me of my old self. I tried hard to rest my brain, and did my best to detract my attention, but it would repeatedly revert to its previous thoughts, so how I ultimately went to sleep I know not.

My experience upon this second visit to the spiritworld was no doubt an improvement upon the first, but not a great one. The next night I did not make any attempt to pass beyond my material bounds, being too tired and worn out by the physical work of the day.

Upon the following evening I again assayed but could not concentrate my presence sufficiently. My mind was too much preoccupied upon earthly things, hence it refused to focus in the direction desired. When I was present with my double, somehow, the interest there was not equal to that of my brain's uppermost thoughts, for the brain had this advantage that it was developed, whereas my double and its connections were yet in their infancy, so that I could not, even with the most strenuous exertion, contend against the more powerful of the two. My companion tried her best to interest me in supernatural things, but it was not a success, so I was compelled to return and abandon the attempt.

This experience proved to me that I must prepare my thoughts previous to making the attempt to assume my immaterial condition, for it is not conducive to success to allow material interests to be uppermost in the mind, but, evidently, from constant association such interests will persistently be to the fore.

The next venture I made was quite a new experience, and one from which I acquired much information ; but, previous to making the attempt to cross the barrier between the two worlds, Marian conversed with me for some time to arouse my interest to a spiritual level.

I was now determined to obtain as much information as possible, for my attention was by this time riveted upon supernatural affairs, so I made the plunge with eagerness.

After I had been welcomed again in the customary manner, however, the old inability to focus my attention returned as strongly as ever. My will failed to have its effect ; noises, thoughts, interests, repeatedly drew me back. It was a struggle between different mental powers, and my brain was developing properties to hold me back. The effect was one of a peculiar nature—a feeling of mental pain, almost beyond endurance, produced by this extraordinary strain upon certain brain-centres. Marian faithfully supported me with all her power in order to assist me to concentrate myself properly by her side, nevertheless, we were compelled to give up the attempt several times, and to start again with renewed energy.

Clarissa now came upon the scene and, after taking in the situation, said : “ I will help you in your efforts. I can utilise my power to enable you to retain your properties in your double.” So I thanked her for her kindness.

“ Nay,” she replied. “ You have been of service to me in many ways, hence I will in return be of whatever assistance I can. I have not yet spoken to you in this our world, but to-night I intend to do so. At present I shall stand beside your body and prevent it from drawing back your power until you are sufficiently interested in your present occupation to gain the upper hand over your brain.”

So then the attempt I made was successful, much to the satisfaction of all concerned in this remarkable and anomalous investigation.

“ You see for yourself,” Marian observed, “ what assistance Clarissa has rendered you, for what before was almost impossible of accomplishment has now been made easy.”

“ Yes,” I replied, “ without doubt I am here again with practically no effort, and I feel as if I could remain in this world for some time yet, since that withdrawing strain has almost entirely disappeared. I am fully satisfied that Clarissa has been of valuable assistance to me, and am sincerely grateful to her for it.”

"Look ! There stands Clarissa beside your body, can you see her ? She is between yourself and your body, she is smiling at you now ! She is very bright and powerful !—you only dimly see her, but you know that it is she ?"

"Yes ! I certainly know that she is there, and indistinctly see her brightness, but her countenance I cannot in the least discern. My own body, I am fully aware, is there also, but I cannot recognise it at all. Somehow, I am happier here now than ever before—the tension is less severe upon my brain."

"Quite so ! You are not in distress at present, so let us go forth, and I will show you something concerning this world."

This said, we began to move, not rapidly, but with deliberation, for we had no destination immediately in view, our intentions not being to one place alone. I was aware that we were moving, and could also tell in which direction from my brain ; then suddenly we stopped, somewhere in this huge region. I knew that Marian was now facing me, and that she was intending to explain something, but at that moment I felt as if I were not worthy of her notice ; too miserably shady and insignificant for this beautiful spirit to tolerate ! I pictured myself as only partly there, for most certainly I was not entirely present in reality, but my interests and desires were present as strongly as possible. It seemed to me as if my instructor must almost necessarily consider me beneath her notice ; and how she countenanced conversing with such an ignorant condition as myself, my unnatural presence, my shadiness, and my limited power in all respects, I cannot imagine !

These thoughts penetrated through my brain as I indistinctly saw her standing in front of me in her brightness. Her patience and perseverance were immeasurable, and thus called for my whole attention. I saw her figure dimly but impressively ; bright as contrasted with my own presence, which I pictured as completely dark—

probably, to her, transparent. My powers of presence and attention fluctuated as they were alternately drawn to my body and forced back again into my double. Such an uncertain condition as that in which my double existed must have been trying to the patience of my spiritual mentor ; still, I knew that she was smiling at me in a kind and proud fashion. She, evidently reading what was passing in my mind, observed :

“Come now, let us converse seriously upon our business ! You must remember, fair sir, that your presence here is for a reason, and that duty must be tolerated. Your mind at present is upon your own smallness as compared with my position, but you must also view it from another aspect ;—are you not a privileged individual living amongst men ? Are you not here now in opposition to the laws governing your material condition ? And is it not your duty to develop such a singular gift ? Banish all such ideas from your mind, and listen to what I have to say to you to-night ! ”

“Well,” I replied, “I feel such a nonentity in your presence, so helpless, so very much under your power, that you have to lead me like a child, and do for me what I cannot do for myself.”

“Come, sir, we shall afterwards see whether you are such a child as you think—you know not your own power.”

I thought to myself, “Just like me, always making improper observations, and putting my word in at the wrong moment.”

“Immediately around us,” Marian resumed, “there is nothing that you can behold, but in the distance are to be distinctly seen spirits enjoying themselves as their inclinations prompt them. They stand in groups as it is pictured best. Amusement in this particular world has great charms, different far from earthly amusement which you know is inseparably associated with worry, annoyance, and other similar mundane qualifications. Here none such are known, for is not this region above

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and advanced beyond the material confinement ? Earthly conditions, you are now beginning to realise, are of an inferior class altogether, subject to trials, temptations, and pain—all unknown in this region. The existence upon earth is but temporary and limited in all respects, for a reason you are well acquainted with—to separate eternal temperaments and properties into their respective classes. The region in which we are at present is inhabited by those who are left behind first ; they are the chaff from the huge mill of eternal existing beings. It is also in this region that all souls begin their subjection, but whether they will ever pass beyond it or not is according to their worthiness or unworthiness in the great Master's eyes. This immense sphere is one of the Master's mighty works, its limits are almost beyond the human power of comprehension. The regions above this one are different stages of progress wherein spirits advance in their purification. Little do these ignorant men realise the insignificant position they occupy in this great sphere ! Look how content they are with themselves ! ”

“ Why ! ” I exclaimed, “ where are we now ? I can feel a presence and see something new ! ”

“ This,” said my companion, “ is the condition upon which your body exists.”

It was quite unrecognisable to me as the earth. We must have been wandering about unknown to myself for a considerable length of time. Further it was impossible to go, for now the exhaustion had become too pronounced for me to remain in the spiritworld any longer, so I let myself free from my double and instantly became my human self again. At once I instinctively sighed, rolled over into a new position and opened my eyes. In this relieved condition, however, I was not allowed to remain long, for my companion began :

“ Now, sir, you certainly did not leave me in a very becoming fashion, but then as I know your feelings when

in your spiritual body, so I forgive you for such unceremonious conduct."

"Yes," I replied; "I knew that I was not very powerful; somehow, I just came back naturally and was here almost before I was aware that I had left you."

"Yes; and now we must return again to collect further information. Your experiences are also my experiences; your interests are my interests, and what is beyond your power of interest is also beyond my interest to explain. This power of unity is necessary for our advance."

Again we passed into that region, when suddenly I saw a brightness quickly flash out in front of my vision. Instinctively I knew that it was Clarissa, but I waited for some reassurance before speaking; then Marian observed: "You now once again behold Clarissa in her power."

"This is surely something strange I see!" began Clarissa. "A form and presence unknown to this region. Welcome, then, my earthly subject in this form and to this region! How you have progressed! You have done well! You have a worthy companion, hence are bound to improve! The secret to success lies in perseverance, therefore continue to persevere and success is sure to follow."

The way in which Clarissa emphasised her remarks and her manner corresponded entirely with my past opinion of her, which I had formed when conversing with her in my material condition, for there was something open and free in her bearing which suited me exactly.

She said but little more, then announced that she must be away upon her business. I thanked her for her kindness in several ways; in reply to which I indistinctly saw her hold up her hand, shake her head, then vanish.

My companion and I then resumed our conversation, when all at once I felt a vacancy. I called her by name, but no answer. I looked around as best I was able, but no spirit could I clearly discern. I could feel that I was

separated from my support ; what was I to do ? My body was now drawing me more strongly than ever, as much as to say "Come back, you fool !" But no, I would not ; indeed, I discovered that I did not exactly know how. For some reason I could not separate my presence from my double ; not, indeed, that I tried much to do so, for inwardly I was eager to find Marian first. I wandered about without any effort, wherever my inclination prompted me, seeking for her power of attraction, which at first had led me on.

Soon it became evident to myself that I was travelling in different directions, each movement being instantaneous but known to myself before changing my course to any other locality. My double, in truth, was leading me without consulting my brain ! It was now finding out its own power, and more than ever did I feel present with it ;—quite a new experience to me to discover my presence so much at home away from my body !

At last I felt a sensation of relief, and vaguely beheld a brightness develop in front of me, which I felt was my lost companion. I seemed to linger, soon became satisfied, then quite naturally my feelings returned to their previous condition when not relying upon my double. I was once more content now that I was near my powerful support, and exclaimed in the style of language adopted in the spiritworld : "Is that you, Marian ? I knew that I should find you again !"

Here I was overcome by the reaction consequent upon my determined search, and could say no more. :

"Well, fair sir, probably now you are satisfied that you are capable of doing actions unknown to yourself. You cannot always rely upon me for support. The time must come when you will be able to wander about at your ease, or you will not be advancing, but, at the same time, you must also be educated."

"Yes, fair lady, I fully realise my immature condition ; still, when put to the test you see that I possess considerable self-assurance, and am to a certain extent

capable of looking after myself. I am beginning to feel a little more at home in this world, and, without doubt, acquiring knowledge ; at the same time I prefer your company to solitude—your assistance and instruction are always beneficial.”

The interest I had centred in my search after Marian had, in a great measure, overcome my body's attraction so that I was now in a state of ease and happiness when I was forcibly impressed that once more was I alone.

“What !” I exclaimed, “gone again.” I looked as well as felt around to my utmost, but most assuredly I was alone.

The thought now possessed me to return to my body, and for an experiment I made the attempt to do so but could not, so I searched again and finally found my help. How it was done I cannot explain, except that it was through the power of attraction which had enabled me in my first attempts to concentrate myself to Marian's side. It was this power that I searched for, and at last found, but probably Marian may have assisted me when she considered that I had wandered about long enough.

Soon after this experiment I was compelled to return to my body again, and was forbidden by my instructor to make another venture, for it was late and my body required rest to fit it for the next day's physical labour.

This visit had been a marked improvement in every respect upon my previous attempts, but I believe that it was through the aid of some power which Clarissa had allowed me that I was more completely present with my double.

X It was several nights before I again resumed my explorations in space, for the reason that I could not prepare my thoughts for the concentration. At last, when this was accomplished, I crossed the boundary and was welcomed as upon all previous occasions when I personated my double with my presence.

I was standing beside Marian, who was perhaps more clearly visible to me than ever before, when Minerva

arrived upon the scene and conversed with me, dilating upon my slow but steady progress.

Minerva, in her precise, methodical way is a very kind spirit, kind in her wishes and warm in her affections—she is exact, though, when aroused to duty !

After we had talked with her for some time she stated that she would see us again before I returned to my body for good, then she vanished.

Marian now almost immediately reminded me that I was in the spiritworld solely for duty and not for pleasure, observing : “ You must now allow me further to show and explain to you more of this world, for you have much to learn and much to experience.”

“ I do not doubt you for a moment, Marian. The nature of my remarkable gift is of a kind so new to human beings that in the exercise of it there must necessarily be much to learn and much to experience. In my natural condition I am a material being living upon the earth, and in my new development I am a supernatural existence, hence what I learn here must be supernatural, and what I see and feel must be mysterious to my brain in its present state, consequently, before it can be expected to appreciate the abstruse, immaterial conditions met with in this world it must be considerably developed. But now confidence in my position is rapidly asserting itself.”

“ Nay, fair sir, you must not yet place too much reliance upon your double’s power.”

“ Well, fair lady, the last experience I had gave me a little confidence. You yourself told me that I had not sufficient reliance in my own powers.”

“ Experience, alone, will make you acquainted with your present properties. All I say is—do not be too confident in your as yet almost undeveloped powers ; I shall now take you to another world similar to the one upon which you dwell.”

“ Another world ! ” I exclaimed. “ What do you mean ? Surely not one of the planets ? How is it possible for me to go so far away from my body ? ”

"Yes, sir! You have already been further away from your body than many of these worlds."

"Fair lady, this region is surely a marvellous world in itself! To think that I have been millions of miles away from my body when it was absolutely at rest! You are ever awakening me to wonderful truths, yet reasonable truths when I become acquainted with them. Planets, though, are almost beyond my power of conception. I to visit a Planet!"

"Yes, fair sir;—come!"

"Wait a moment; how shall I see this world? My power of vision is as yet dim, although I can certainly feel and communicate better."

"Do not linger, but come. My fair sir your vision will be limited, but your impressions and feelings will satisfy you."

We then made a rapid movement and instantly were there—sure enough! The impression I received of this world was precisely the same as that imparted to me when I visited the earth during my late journey. My vision was limited just the same; my feelings were again exactly similar, yet in some way I knew that this was not the world upon which I myself laboured when in the flesh. I could distinctly see spirits and the material inhabitants as we slowly wended our way through them. My sense of feeling being stronger than that of vision, so I knew instinctively through the former sense that this was another world, unknown to me, for there was a feeling of newness and foreignness somewhere. My companion stopped and communed with me:

"Now, sir, examine this new world for yourself. Satisfy your doubts by inquiring of me whatever you will. I am your instructor, so then lean upon me for any information which your own powers cannot satisfy you upon."

"Well, Marian, in the first place what world is this?"

"I know not:—what does that matter? The names given by man to any or all of these worlds are of no

moment, and, indeed, are unknown to any beyond the earth's inhabitants. There are many of these worlds, but to me there is only one and that is the one upon which I was subjected, the one upon which your poor body is now waiting. Indeed, this is the first time that I have visited any other world but our own. I have no desire whatever to do so, no curiosity ; in fact, I scarcely knew of their existence beyond that there were such other worlds."

" Well, do I have the impression correct when I say that I can feel and see that this one is inhabited by souls in bondage, like the earth ? "

" Yes, you are correct. Behold those spirits ! Look how they tempt and tease their subjects precisely as is done upon our old earthly home ! "

" Do they exist in the same way as the inhabitants of our planet ? I mean, are they similar in their subjection and works ? "

" They may possess different qualities, different material properties, but I know not. It matters little ; they are all God's subjects, hence, as the Master is a just and loving master, so their labours and opportunities must be exactly equal with those upon our world."

" Yes ; but Marian, you must know whether this and other worlds are conducted upon independent lines. I mean in a different way from the earth, and, likewise, whether each one is quite separately governed. This particular world, for instance, does it govern and work its own self distinct from any other ? "

" Well, as to that I cannot say ; but take my case and all cases you know of. No spirits have ever worked in connection with any other world than the one upon which they themselves were subjected—beyond this I know nothing. But this region contains all the worlds, as well as confines all those who are not worthy to advance. This region is God's mill, the others are His separators which divide the products from this region into their innumerable classifications. Behold the power and

knowledge of the Master—it is incomprehensible, it is unlimited ! Think of the billions of souls He supervises, and of each one's merits He knows ! The progress of every individual soul is controlled by Him. Hah, you may well look surprised ! I tell you, my friend, that this region alone is thousands and thousands of times more complicated and more wonderful than even our learned superior, Minerva, can fathom. None but Complete Knowledge can realise the vastness of, none but Complete Power can rule, this region ! Think of the many pompous earthly kings ruling only small bodies of men !—they cannot even govern their few subjects to entire satisfaction in their material bodies alone ; and compare that earthly king and his subjects with the Heavenly King and this region only—one is a mere cipher, the other is Perfection ! Oh, there is no comparing them, such vast apart rulers ! But now we must return to Minerva again.”

“No, no, not yet, Marian ! This is too interesting ; let us further consider this subject ? ”

“Nay, sir ! Your body is drawing you back strongly even now.”

“Oh, I forgot about that body. It surely can submit for once. I am in no hurry to return. Marian, can't you sever the connection and free me to myself, say for some hours ? ”

“Indeed not, sir ! You ask what I cannot do—but come, we can continue this conversation next time you visit this region.”

“Well,” I said, “I agree.” For surely my body was pulling me back with a terribly exhausting attraction, but I was not disposed to respond, no, not until I was compelled, for I was more proud of my double and its very remarkable properties than of that body which confined me under subjection.

Suddenly we made an upward movement, then as suddenly came to a standstill. My companion, as usual, faced me, and I looked into her countenance as intently

as possible, but my spiritual vision was still too imperfect to be able to learn much. The power which I was most anxious to educate seemed to improve the slowest, for in my present condition seeing is more satisfactory and confidential than feeling, even though it may not leave the same lasting impression.

Marian conversed with me upon unimportant topics until I beheld a bright light suddenly develop in front of me. I bowed out of respect, for I was now confronting my two spiritual instructors. This done, a thrill of pleasure, excitement, and hope seemed to pass through my frame, but of a sudden my presence was wanting in its fulness. How I struggled with myself to retain my powers in my double, but it was of no avail for they were being slowly drawn back to my body. At this I became somewhat annoyed, and would not allow my presence to desert my double, consequently, both parts were drawn down together, angry and insulted. For a few seconds a conflict waged between my double and my body, and even my indignant presence, when first entering into my body, handled it unkindly. I jumped up and was about to abuse my poor, ill-treated material frame, but quickly calmed down again when I actually realised who it was that I was about to maltreat; so, after changing my bodily position, I concentrated all my power into one strenuous effort, tightening my hands until the blood would not circulate, then threw myself back into my double, and was again present beside my instructors.

They were smiling as if amused at my conduct; but I was in earnest in my determination to do as I pleased with my new properties. Such behaviour as my body had just treated me to was not to be tolerated!

This little episode was evidently not lost sight of by my material person, for it now behaved like a lamb and I was present with my double more completely than ever.

My double and presence at this moment, no doubt, wore an air of indignant satisfaction, and as I looked up I beheld Marian bowing to me, then she said:

"Now, loyal sir, your presence is here again; you struggled somewhat unnecessarily; your body will fall out with you, and then what a time you will have to comfort yourself when you return."

This she said by way of joke, but it awakened in me thoughts of what might possibly happen, still not very probable, for after all my body was no enemy to my spiritual self; besides, it was little more than a body; all the other properties were controlled by myself, for I was the power who overruled the body.

There I stood facing my two instructors; Marian upon my right, and Minerva to my left. My double probably could see them very clearly, but my brain failed to receive more than a dim impression. I could feel them both, and I knew them each by their feel, and of the two Minerva was many times more pronounced in my feelings, for she was more powerful and brighter.

I now asked Minerva to explain to me clearly the nature of my presence in my double, for I wanted to know what a double really was, and how it was controlled.

"Well, sir, your double, every living person's double, is simply a portion of the soul. The body of any person who has a double does not subject the entire soul, and the double is that section of it which is free. Where dwell the thoughts and desires of that portion of the soul under subjection there the double, being part of the soul, is drawn, hence helps the other part to concentrate its thoughts. Now in your case you are developed still more, for you can concentrate your presence, your desires and interests, in your double. Instead of your feelings and other such properties of the soul being bound to your body they can be concentrated in your double, hence it is through your double that you listen to our communications, and through your double that you see us. If, as you say, you can but indistinctly see, then that is the fault of the brain-centre which receives the impressions from the double, for the greater part of yourself is subjected in the body. The brain is the power of both the body and the

Then who
was sitting
in the
shrouded
chair

Some don't
have souls.

double, so the brain is the knowledge centre. The double is a branch in your case fast developing. If your entire soul were loosened from its imprisonment then your body would be dead, for the soul is the life of the body. The double, then, is the power which must be developed before you can appreciate the spiritual condition, for both are without substance."

"Thanks, Minerva. Your explanation is very clear ; but what sort of an appearance has my double when my presence is in it, and when it is not ? "

"Ah ! You ask me a difficult question, but I can answer you. Your plain double is nothing more than an indistinct, transparent form even to us spirits. When your life's properties are here with your double then the latter is of some importance. It then has a life and a power of its own ; it is no longer ruled by the life and the powers confined in the body, and according to your presence so is the appearance of your double. Now, for instance, you look to me rather peculiar ; a condition never seen here so completely ; it is not a spirit nor yet a double ; it is, then, half spirit, half double. It is an incomplete spirit ; only a portion of the soul is here, and nearly all the presence and powers (all immaterial), natural to such an existence, the rest are withheld in your body as not necessary here, or as incapable of coming. Oh, yes, you are a wonderful composition, a wonderfully incomplete construction ! "

✓ "Yes, Minerva ; I certainly can grasp that much—but wonders never cease coming, so now I am beginning to look upon them as a matter of course."

"Yes, my fair subject ! You are a remarkable personage—fancy existing in two worlds at once ! Think of this when at work to-morrow."

Here she bowed her prim self and vanished into the distance where I might see her again.

"There ! my friend," Marian exclaimed. "She is still looking at us,—do you see her ? "

"Well ! I certainly see something bright, but I can

feel that it is she, and that is always convincing. How clear and explicit Minerva was in her remarks about my double—don't you think so, Marian ? ”

“ Yes, indeed ! I wonder how many times I have told you the same thing myself.”

“ What you say is quite correct, Marian, but you must remember that I am handicapped by a material brain which can understand earthly conditions well, but these are more or less foreign to it and difficult to grasp, therefore have to be impressed over and over again. It is not because I forget what you tell me, but for reassurance that I repeat any question. I do not doubt your statements in the least, but, somehow, my brain refuses to be easily satisfied. Would you have me only half understand all these wonderful mysteries ? ”

“ Nay, sir, you mistake my meaning. Remember you are here on duty. You are most certainly correct in demanding satisfactory explanations, and it is my wish to expound everything clearly and precisely so that you may have no doubt whatever in your earthly brain. What I did say was for the purpose of drawing you up to the importance of your position ; to make you realise that you are dealing with powers who are in earnest—but, come ! forgive me, I always have such peculiar ways of bringing about my ends. I fully sympathise with you in your work here, for I know all that passes through your brain, but still it is my duty to tutor you severely and correctly. It is a hard schooling, no doubt, but then think of the beneficial result to your fellow creatures ; think of what this experience of yours will lead to. You do not realise, you do not grasp what the ultimate effect will be, for you regard all this simply as a matter of duty, with a hope to know a little more each visit, without ever thinking about the issue.”

“ That is true, Marian ! But as I have frequently said before, you know me better than I know myself. A strange fact, but evidently a very real one ! Of course, I have no objection to your reading my mind, but then, why should

I commune with you at all when you know my deepest thoughts ? ”

“ Well, my friend ! You see I wish to make you speak from the depth of your heart. I know whether you accurately give utterance to your thoughts, hence I am in a position to draw you up or praise you. You must recognise that it is developing you in another direction, teaching you to speak with unswerving correctness, as well as enabling me to see whether or not your ideas are sound.”

“ Quite so ! It seems that you can lead me just wherever you wish. But when I think of it you are extremely good to me ; whenever you trouble me there is always a necessity and it is for my own good, whereas you could make me do practically anything, and believe whatever you might say. It is, indeed, lucky for me that I have fallen into such kind hands, but you know what I mean.”

“ Yes ! Yes ! You need not worry yourself about that, fair sir. Surely you can trust me to do my best to further your interests, for I am, as it were, laying the foundation of my own future as well as yours ! You are also drawing the map of our future, so both interests are one. Again, I have no desire to disturb your peace and happiness ; nay, the opposite ; I am happy when you are happy, hence my one effort is to make you happy.”

“ Well, Marian, let this subject be disposed of as satisfactorily explained ; and now I feel as if I must return to my body. I have stayed here long and increased my knowledge considerably ; also, I thank you for your clear explanations, but really I cannot conceal how extremely small I am becoming in my own estimation. Marian, I think you had better at once go up to your sphere, before I return to my body, so that I may see you ascend to your happiness, while I go the other way.”

“ Not so, sir ! I accompany you and remain by your side until sleep overcomes you, as I have done in the past, then I retire to my sphere until you begin your daily work again.”

“ Indeed ! But how do you know when I waken up ? ”

“ My dear friend, you are still very far short of knowing much about this world. I am connected with you by a magnetic bond of union, part of my mission ! ”

When I returned to my body it was in a terrible condition. A cold, clammy sweat of exhaustion stood upon my skin and my night-dress was quite moist. As soon as I became my material self again I tried to turn over in bed, but to my dismay found that my limbs would scarcely obey. My prostration was so great that I could with difficulty sit up ; but eventually I rolled out of bed and cooled down, then I felt much better and communed with Marian until I slept.

At odd times during the day, when not otherwise pre-occupied, my mind would slowly wander back to my experiences in the region of departed souls. How all my operations in the spiritworld were smoothly planned before I was allowed to attempt them I clearly perceived. Each one had its own moral or purpose. How surely and satisfactorily I was advancing was apparent to myself. What was in store for me I knew not. I was fully alive to everything that took place, and was able to view each act from a human standpoint as well as from a spiritual. What troubles and worries I had were essentially of my own making, for it was only necessary for me to allow myself to advance and not ponder over what could not be helped. My duty was to listen attentively to my teachers, to ask questions when necessary, and the answers were always immediately forthcoming. I had to obey implicitly, to exercise my power when ordered, and to allow myself to be led on. All corrections had to be patiently borne, for evidently they were necessary for my benefit and progress. Repeatedly I was informed that I had not yet begun my real work, so then I had to look forward to great and wonderful revelations.

✓ My experiences in the spiritworld were totally different from those encountered in the bodily form, where one's forethought and physical strength count for something. They were of a new order altogether, unlooked for, and

persistently forced upon me. The powers I utilised were as yet in their first stages of development. I was handicapped all round, therefore my only alternative was to do the best I could under the circumstances ; but the impressions which I did receive were so firmly and convincingly imprinted that I could not regard them as otherwise than correct. In my spiritual portion I was mysteriously placed, totally beyond explanation, and only experience and the knowledge acquired from experience will reveal to the brain what my true feelings were.

My next visit brought with it further information and many morals. Still, it is very difficult for me clearly to explain what I saw and passed through, for on paper and in words there is a complete inability to define what I really underwent. In dealing with occult matters words are altogether too superficial to explain conditions met with. They were not coined for such a purpose, hence they do not possess the necessary qualifications.

When I commune in the spiritworld I marvel at the wondrously clear explanations I receive, and at my own ability to express my feelings. The communicating powers, natural to the spiritual existence, are fitted for and capable of discharging their work, just as the language of man is able to explain mundane conditions, therefore it is too much to ask the latter to do what the former alone are purposely intended for.

Before I concentrated my presence in my double, Marian as usual conversed with me to arouse my spiritual desires, and thus to enable me the better to focus my attention closely on the subject in hand.

On this occasion it seemed as if I just stepped out of my body into my double. There I was beside my companion again. Somehow I always appeared to be facing her, and she ever welcomed me with a smile and a bow which I returned in my humble way. I could see her clearly, still at the same time but dimly ; clearly, in the sense that I knew my double could appreciate the sight ; dimly, from the fact that the connection between my double and brain

was as yet but imperfectly developed, hence the latter did not receive a definite impression. Nevertheless, there was a great improvement upon my first visit, for I had only to recall my earliest impressions and I could clearly perceive the progress I had made in all directions. When Marian conducted me away from my earthly surroundings there was, likewise, a marked change for the better. I was free from the baneful influence of many spirits whose very presence had their effect upon my double, so that, when away in clear space, I was at liberty to place myself entirely under the guidance of my companion. Her communications, also, were better explained and easier to grasp when free from all dull surroundings and adverse currents.

Little as these points were still they were instructive, and I did not fail to notice them. I was rapidly learning how to be more at ease when free from my body, and far away in space ; I was happier also. Undeniably the very surroundings of clear space, if I may be allowed to use the term, free from the presence of other powers, either of evil or curiosity, improved my condition and rid me of trouble. "Peace" is the best word by which it can be explained, yet over and above what has just been stated there was a nagging and exhausting desire to return to my body persistently manifest. My subjected soul, however, is gradually getting accustomed to being separated from its power, so that this feeling will in time, no doubt, slowly subside.

"Now, sir," Marian began, "welcome here again ; and, as you are rapidly becoming acclimatised to this region, lead me, I beg you, wherever you will ; ask me whatever is in your mind."

"No, Marian," I replied, "it is impossible for me to lead you. You are my instructor, therefore you must do the leading."

"No, sir ; you shall lead me ; you must progress you know, so let us go."

I felt greatly honoured, but knew of no place to visit

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until I remembered that world which we had already casually examined. So I essayed to go there, and was successful in the attempt ;—how?—I cannot explain ; it was instinctively natural to my condition. At first I could alone feel that I was there, and that the surroundings were similar to those on the earth, so I bade my companion show and explain to me their nature. I could detect that I was in the midst of spirits, and feel that they were of many kinds, principally frivolous. I knew that they were highly amused at my appearance and were wondering to themselves what kind of an existence I was ; something new to them, no doubt.

“ You see, you have accomplished this much,” Marian remarked, “ and unaided have brought me to this world. Look at those spirits astonished at your appearance ! But they are gathering fast, so let us begone to some place where they are not so numerous and where you will be free from all baneful influence.”

I got the impression that we must have arrived in the midst a very densely populated settlement, but had no opportunity of investigating further. Then we went to some lonely place, where at first no spirits were visible or even felt by me.

“ Now, sir,” Marian resumed, “ we are alone and free from influences troublesome to you as yet only partially developed spiritual form. This is that same world we visited before ; it is just like the earth to me, for of course I have not power to see the inhabitants in an exact way. I have no desire to do so, for I have no power. You, no doubt, are curious to examine them, but you will learn that there is no curiosity in this world when you are not allowed to search ; the curiosity comes with the power to search.”

“ Very feasible,” I replied, “ but surely you see whether these inhabitants are classified as equal with people on the earth in their progress ? ”

“ Ah, sir ! You see I know nothing about these people. They are God’s servants undergoing subjection for the

same reason that man upon the earth is. Beyond this I know nothing, for I have no power to see."

"Fair lady! Surely those are spirits wishing to converse with us; ask and see? You perceive that I saw and felt when they arrived? They may wish to tell us something, for I believe they are bright."

"Yes! They are certainly bright, but have nothing to say to us. They are curious at your presence, but see, they have now gone!"

"Look here, fair lady! You just now said that spirits had no curiosity where they had no power to find out. Of course, your remarks only had reference to advancing spirits, that I know; how then were these spirits whom we have just met curious?"

"Good, my friend, you are now finding your wits; but that is easily explained. Those spirits we saw are surety spirits working their advance, but you noticed that they were not curious to talk with us. They undoubtedly knew of our presence here, and presented themselves in front of us for the sole purpose of satisfying themselves that we were in no way interfering with the conditions of this world. You know that we belong to another world and are intruders here, but we have power to come. Those spirits saw that we were here for a purpose, that we were from another world, and that we were only discharging our duty, hence they were satisfied and left."

"Oh! Then these worlds are all guarded against intruders, and the spirits whom we encountered were the peaceful watchers over the inhabitants of this particular one?"

"Yes, such is the case; if not, then frivolous spirits would gather in their untold millions and attack these worlds as a plague upon the poor, suffering, ignorant inhabitants. Evil spirits, also, would come and do great harm, so these spirits are the guardians over this individual world. It is one of God's mills, and is safeguarded against intruders. Oh, this wonderful region is governed by a Mighty King whose knowledge knows no bounds!"

"Then, fair lady, could these spirits have forbidden us to return here had they chosen ? "

"Oh, no ! Certainly not, for we have power to come, and if we have power then we are discharging our duty and have permission. You see we are not of the frivolous class, hence would not come here without a reason. These watchers have power to expel frivolous and evil spirits if they consider it advisable to do so, but, as I have just said, they are here to guard against intrusion in large numbers. All regions, also, must be thus protected. It would not equalise the chance of every soul undergoing the test if all evil and frivolous spirits were free to torment one world alone. The power of evil on that particular world would be enormous, irresistible ; and on others there would be no evil spirits to tempt, for it is not the singles but the millions wherein the power of evil is manifest. You know that there are many grains in a mountain, and a mountain is immovable by man, but each grain separately is of no consideration ; such then is the combined power of evil. The Great Master has power to remove the mountain, so, likewise, has He power to control evil."

"Yes," I replied, "that is correct. God overlooks nothing. He is All Knowledge, All Power. But now, could I go forth alone and examine for myself what the conditions and influences of this world are like ? You know that then I should be free to form my own opinions, and have my own impressions of what I see and feel. Such would give me great satisfaction, fair lady, if it is not asking too much."

"Go where you wish ; I will remain here until you return."

So then I started out. I could distinguish the line of surface of the substance of which this world was composed, but could not follow it. I would go either beneath or above it, hence I found it very difficult to keep my bearings, for in my present condition matter is of no consideration at all to me. In my journey at times I saw groups of spirits, then none at all. Occasionally I came across bright spirits, but to one bright there were many times

more of the frivolous and evil types. I could but indistinctly see them, and once I remained in the midst of a group of bright spirits, but failed to find any attraction there. I certainly derived a measure of satisfaction from my solitary journey, and, although I had learned comparatively little, still I had obtained my own impressions. However, when I found that travelling about on my own account in a region where everything is beyond my knowledge and human comprehension was not altogether such a success as I had anticipated, I returned instantly to my companion, for I felt her power in me strong.

"So you have returned, fair sir!" Marian forthwith began. "You have now probably satisfied yourself, but you would have fared better, so far as information goes, if you had allowed me to accompany you in your wanderings. But now let us visit elsewhere, for there are other worlds besides this one, you know."

So we went, travelling at a comparatively slow pace, communing as we journeyed, and soon we reached another world, another region of substance, then we stopped.

"Now, my friend," Marian began, "what do you see here, what do you feel?"

"Well, I know that we are upon another world, for I can feel the presence of substance, but, somehow, it is different from the last."

"Now go and see what you can discover concerning this mass of substance."

I went. Hither and thither I wandered at will; at one time keeping as best I could to the surface line, at another diving into the interior. Soon I reached its limits, but nowhere could I feel anything to attract me, nor yet did I find any spirits. I thought that the little power I did possess must have forsaken me, and I tried to imagine spirits there, but it was a fruitless effort, so I returned to Marian in a state of doubt and despondency, being almost ashamed to meet her with an unsatisfactory reply.

"Come, sir! What did you learn? You saw many things, did you not?"

I made no reply but determined to try again, and

started out with that intention. Instantly she forbade me, saying, "My friend, what have you seen? Surely you are not afraid of me, your instructor? Ah! you saw nothing; is that so?"

"Well, fair lady, I certainly could neither see nor feel anything. It is strange, but without doubt my power has left me. You must come with me and explain, for it seems that I am not yet capable of doing much for myself."

"Ah, my noble subject! You see this region is not occupied by any of God's servants. It is barren here; solely for a purpose which the Great King knows best."

How I reproached myself for not having thought of such a possibility; nevertheless, my mind was full of wonder, and I exclaimed: "Well, then, my powers were not at fault after all, for most certainly I was unable to see or feel anything."

"Yes, you were right; but, now, as there is nothing of interest here to retain us, let us go."

And we went to a region of bliss. It was in pure, unadulterated space, for there was nothing visible save my companion, who was standing in front of me.

"Now, fair sir!" Marian suddenly observed. "You are my subject and I your instructor. You are the one upon whom I depend. You are my superior, for am I not telling you what you have to make known to God's people? I am merely your tutor."

Whereupon I could see my companion apparently bowing to me.

"Fair sir! Are you not satisfied with your progress? Did I not foretell that you would become satisfied? Did I not say that you were to be a distinguished man, and to bear many a responsibility? How you doubted my statements. You said there was nothing in you capable of becoming distinguished; but look at yourself now, your position, your knowledge, your privilege! The responsibility is great, I admit, but I am ever ready to help you, for I have power for that purpose."

At this I was greatly touched, and said: "Not so,

fair lady ! It is beneath your dignity to bow to such a humble individual as myself. Am I not merely the means you have of discharging your mission ? the means by which Minerva explains her works to the inhabitants of the world upon which I live ? (Here I knelt before her.) Am I not but a miserable earthly worm ? I ask your pardon for all offences I have committed, for they were done in ignorance. I am only a mortal being ; such, at least, is my real condition, so let the past remain the past."

"Rise, sir ! It was never intended that you should kneel before such as I. Rise, I command you ! Now listen to me. You are the human means by which this work is carried out, hence the more important in human estimation. I am your spiritual tutor, hence the more important in this world. We are one in the entire work ; one is necessary to the other."

"Quite so ! I admit that I am privileged in being permitted to enter this world. This in itself is proof positive that I am incapable of doing my work without means of emphasising it ; however, the training which I am now undergoing will, no doubt, ultimately supply that."

"Well, sir, the training which you are now undergoing is absolutely necessary, as you will afterwards find out. Remember, your work is now to investigate a world wherein no material condition whatever exists ; hence your immaterial properties are alone of any value in this research, and these are now being developed."

"The task you have in hand, Marian, is by no means an easy one, but I suppose it is simply a question of 'power' ?"

"Yes, sir ! Power is the essential property, but still your mental faculties and other attributes of your soul must be educated up to this work before success can be achieved."

"Well, Marian, the entire proposition is a most complex one, and difficult in the extreme for the human brain to grasp."

"True, sir ; but the human brain is not being called upon to grasp anything beyond its capacity. Now let us return to your body, for I have something to say to you when we get there."

It did not take us long to accomplish the return journey, for it seemed as if we were at my body almost as soon as Marian had finished speaking.

"Now, my pupil, listen !" began Marian, as she stood facing me, dimly visible to my uneducated vision.

In an instant a current of information reached my brain that I had to write down my experiences in the spiritworld. I remained silent and preoccupied at the very thought of having to do such a thing ; neither was this the method usually adopted by either of my instructors when communicating their wishes—at least not the way in which I was in the habit of receiving them.

"Do you hear, sir, what your instructions are ?"

"Yes, I understand, Marian ! But how, indeed, am I going to write down my experiences ? I cannot possibly explain what I have undergone ; besides, I have had no experience worth ——"

"Sir, what selfishness ! You know that you are equal to writing anything if you choose. It is your retiring disposition which revolts at the thought of publicity ; you must overcome that tendency. I shall most certainly wean you from such weakness, and make a man of you ; remember, it is your duty !"

The argument was all one-sided, and so I was compelled to obey. Marian promised to help me to remember things, and said that she would stand by my side and see that I put down everything of importance. There were to be no omissions upon any consideration, and I agreed to begin the following Sunday. Since then I have written off and on as circumstances allowed me, and at present I am still considerably in arrears.

How I objected to the peremptory command to record my experiences ! Not that I was in the least ashamed of them, but the idea of having to do such a thing had never

really entered my mind, hence the severity of the shock.

That night I felt in a worried condition of hopeless surrender, excitement, and wonder : excitement, when I seriously realised from a human standpoint what knowledge upon occult matters I was acquiring ; wonder, when I meditated upon what the world would think of it, and where it would all end.

I have been compelled to commit to paper everything of importance just as it happened, or as I experienced it. If ever I faltered before starting I would feel Marian's reassuring impressions urging me on, and once commenced in earnest I could keep on writing until exhaustion or headache overcame me. It was the beginning of the undertaking at which I hesitated, for the pen is not my *forte*, and I have handled it but little since leaving school, beyond writing Minerva's works. I am accustomed to outdoor exercise of all kinds connected with the management of cattle, so that naturally I felt some reluctance, and even doubted my ability to comply with the demand made upon me.

Whatever information is imparted to me from my instructor, Marian, is rushed through my brain, translated from electric currents into man's language by my soul, written down by my own power, and the entire performance controlled by Marian, through the power of her mission.

I have not the slightest doubt now that I am a person possessed of powers capable of development beyond the normal. These gifts are not to benefit myself personally, but essentially to enlighten those who are anxious for information upon this new, advanced, and abstruse subject. It is doubtless the first stepping-stone leading to a future wonderful era in man's progress. It unfolds to him a map of the world beyond the grave, of intangible conditions everywhere, wherein numerous discoveries must be made before that world can even be partially known to man. Indeed, I am satisfied, from what little

personal experience I have had, that man, with his intentionally limited powers, will never be able to understand even that wonderful region called the "First Sphere."

The condition of spirits, their powers, their works, and their interests are totally beyond comprehension by man with his present mental endowment. There are volumes upon volumes of information to be acquired and understood upon this sphere alone, where we are now but attempting to decipher and fathom the meaning of the first page. On this first page there is much to learn, enough, I think, for man to study in this era at least.

As I write down these little experiences I am impelled to record every important event, as well as every parley of consequence that took place, and it is astonishing with what ease they are reproduced in my mind. The impressions left upon my brain are deep and lasting, for they have called into exercise new nerve-centres, always present, but hitherto in an embryo state. In the past they have not been developed in man simply because he never has had occasion to use them, but the Omniscience of God provided them against the day when they would be required. This I know to be the case as far as I am concerned, for I can most distinctly feel the development slowly progressing. They will only allow so much strain upon them, then they become exhausted; therefore, I consider that before I can derive a measurable degree of satisfaction, and gather even a superficial knowledge of the spiritworld from my journeys there, much time must elapse. It is impossible for me to join my tutor in her world every night, for the particular nerve-centres brought into operation upon such occasions, exhausted from the previous day's experiment, fail to work satisfactorily; also, if I have been writing these notes it fatigues the spiritual portion of my brain, for no doubt my instructor is impressing upon me what to write more than I am aware of, hence this condition is brought about—a condition of local brain exhaustion, whereas my body and other brain properties are fresh.

When I was instructed to record my experiences I felt

very strongly inclined not to allow myself to proceed further in this matter, but such thought gradually receded from my mind, probably thus affected by the great power of Minerva.

In writing down my observations the very fact that they were so prominently present in my mind strongly impressed me with the truth of everything I had experienced. My spiritual vision power is certainly the greatest obstacle I have to contend against ; it is sadly behindhand in development, but still I notice a gradual improvement in it. I am fully aware that my double sees everything, but the connection between my double and my brain is so delicate that what the presence and double really see in the electric world is conveyed into and transmitted through the brain in that portion as yet but imperfectly developed, hence the impressions are not completely transferred. In consequence of this my double sees and knows more than is absorbed by my brain, but naturally I am unable to record anything beyond what the latter has received. This is only what is reasonable, when one understands that the double is a free agent—that portion of the soul free from subjection. At the same time it has little or no power when the personal presence is not concentrated into it. When, however, my brain powers are there, my spiritual sense of feeling is very clear and pronounced, and is always correct when tested, for it is principally through this well-developed property of feeling that I know when spirits are coming, or when they vanish, or when I am in clear space, or wandering about upon a planet. The impressions I receive through this agency are unmistakable, and very reassuring, so that as far as feeling goes there is every satisfaction, and I have not the slightest doubt but that the vision properties will keep on developing until they reach their maximum of proficiency. In dealing with highly abstruse properties of this kind one must wait patiently for improvement, and when this is even minutely appreciable one becomes satisfied that there is hope for further development.

In considering the above-mentioned powers of vision and feeling it must be clearly understood that they are quite different and distinct from the corresponding senses in man. They are of a higher order altogether, and are absolutely necessary when dealing with electric conditions, eternal conditions, unlimited by time or distance, for to material man such conditions are invisible and intangible. One is very apt to overlook this fact unless the subject be carefully considered, and to attribute to improper causes any want of development in these supernatural properties.

My visits to the immaterial world are for the time being practically at an end. They were undertaken more particularly to develop and educate my dormant higher powers ; further, they were of a nature most calculated to accomplish this, and all concerned in this investigation are satisfied with the improvement. There are, however, a few incidents running through my brain, while I am now writing, to remind me that I have something further to record.

Besides the visits mentioned in the foregoing pages I made one or two other attempts to obtain some satisfactory information about that region which is such a mystery to man. In company with Minerva and Marian I went to another world, which Minerva explained to me as being worked by the Great Master upon principles similar to those in operation in the conduct of the Earth. I then requested to be allowed to investigate it for myself, and set out alone for that purpose. My curiosity for information about anything and everything that concerns this wonderful spiritworld is becoming more evident as I advance ; probably the fact that I have been ordered to write down my experiences has stimulated me in this direction ; and during this journey I exerted my utmost power to gain information, so possibly I was a little too forward in my efforts to obtain it.

Nothing but occasional groups of spirits I saw, and probably some of the material inhabitants, but for these

latter I could not find any power to search. It seemed to me that my ability to look for them was restricted to my limited vision. I did not know what to expect, so could not arouse my double to a sense of curiosity ; the power was not there to excite this curiosity, therefore I was compelled to give it up. At last, after wandering aimlessly about, and finding great difficulty in keeping the surface-line of matter, I stopped in the midst of a group of spirits, who were, I knew, looking wonderingly at my abnormal presence ; there was evidently some attraction for them somewhere. I could see and feel a powerful, bright spirit, as well as others less bright. For some time, if such an expression be proper, I remained there looking on, and thinking what I had better do, then suddenly I summoned up courage and approached this bright spirit. In the politest manner at my command I begged for a short interview. This spirit, I was aware, smiled at me with an inquiring glance, and replied to this effect : “ I know of no such condition as you, begone ! ” and I was compelled to go. This rebuff did not check me in the least, and soon afterwards I met three bright spirits of about the same power—this I saw and felt. The attraction towards them was greater than at the previous place of interest, and I instinctively waited for some moments to arouse their curiosity, then commenced. I similarly prayed them to put up with my extraordinary appearance for a short time, and to converse with me. One, the spirit in the centre, replied :

“ You are certainly an unnatural power of existence—new to us ! ”

“ No doubt I am,” was my reply, “ but at the same time I am anxious for information ; can you help me a little ? ”

“ Nay, stranger ! I have no orders to communicate with you that I am aware of, so cannot.”

At this I was reluctantly forced away. Then it struck me that I was altogether too impertinent ; but how was I to know the ways and manners of these spirits ? No offence was intended, yet clearly I was offensive, so I

returned to my companions, probably a little wiser by the experience.

This undue curiosity of mine had outstepped its bounds ; nevertheless, somehow I feel that it is incumbent upon me sooner or later to know much concerning the spiritworld, for reasons intimately connected with man's eternal welfare.

I did not on that occasion relate my recent adventures to my associates, for I thought it would too palpably expose my extreme ignorance ; still, I do not doubt for one moment but that they knew everything that was going on even whilst I was in the process.

Since then I have not visited that particular world again, for the sole reason that my power and knowledge are as yet altogether too immature to find out anything beyond what I already know. I am, however, anticipating another attempt, for I feel considerably interested in it, but my spiritual education must first be carefully attended to.

An existence with earthly interests, desires, and curiosity is evidently a new and unknown condition in the spiritworld, hence neither of those spirits whom I so boldly addressed seemed willing to countenance my inquisitiveness, intensified as it was by my anomalous appearance.

Spirits, of course, are under spiritual laws and requirements, but so far such are not applicable to myself. I go in an abnormal spiritual form, with material interests and ideas, so in mixing with spirits I get considerably knocked about when by myself. But, then, what can I do ? I have my duty to discharge, and in my efforts to learn I meet with rough treatment.

Despite these untoward circumstances each attempt I make reveals to me many new things. I also feel it necessary for my own improvement to undertake these journeys alone, for it establishes reliance in myself, educates me sharply to the ways of the spiritworld, and the impressions I receive are indelibly imprinted upon my mind.

In our wanderings, on one occasion, we arrested our course near a world of considerable magnitude. Forthwith, I determined to explore its surface, and satisfy myself whether it was level or mountainous. This, as upon previous instances, I found it almost impossible to do, for in my forward movement I could not prevent myself from either deviating into the interior or launching off into space away from its surface. Whether this was because I met with mountains, and, from the speed at which I was travelling, dived through them before I was aware of the fact, or because I am incapable, from my spiritual properties, of following the surface-line of matter, I cannot say. I then begged Marian to help me to rectify this unsatisfactory tendency, but instead of doing good she made matters worse, for now I could neither feel nor hug the surface-line at all, and she, with commendable reason, could find no interest in such a peculiar occupation, therefore we gave it up as a bad job.

This mass of substance was very small in comparison with the size of the world I had previously visited, and whereon I had experienced my little surprise from those unsociable spirits. It was uninhabited, but beyond this fact I could not discover anything worth noting.

Marian pointed out other worlds, merely to aid me in my vision of their supernatural electric properties ; at least, the way in which I see them is supernatural to the human brain. I beheld them from a space point of view, as I was told, from probably millions of miles distance, and to my vision they were duller than the light of space. The visible worlds are all surrounded by spirits in various ways prompting the inhabitants, and it is from the combined electric power, hence brightness, of these spirits that such worlds are visible to other spirits at a distance. Those worlds that were not inhabited, and thus presented no spiritual light to make them visible, were unseen but felt by myself.

Upon the above subject I have been very particular

to obtain correct ideas, and I am told that such impressions are right from my point of view.

In each of my journeys I was visited by Minerva. She evidently discovered our whereabouts from the power of connection she had with us, which her mission gave her. Each time she would converse with me, and explain anything upon which I desired to be enlightened, whilst I was in the presence of both my tutors.

Minerva appeared to me considerably more powerful than Marian; she also looked brighter, her brightness being of a greater radius and altogether more intense than that surrounding Marian. When she was present my attention was always forcibly centred upon her. I could but dimly discern the outline of her figure on account of the brightness enveloping it; her countenance also was but indistinctly represented in my brain; still, I knew when she moved or altered her expression. Indeed there was something akin to solidity about Minerva's presence which impressed me forcibly; her manner was precise, her communications on duty alone, and somehow, I could not ask questions that did not pertain to my educational benefit.

Marian, comparing her with Minerva, was much smaller to my vision, more circumscribed in her brightness, but, perhaps, not in the outline of her figure; still, her whole presence was less solid, less concentrated.

I was introduced to several spirits from the same sphere as Marian. They were much interested in my doings, and marvelled at my peculiar ways and very peculiar appearance. They conversed with me quite affably, and, certainly, from the nature of their observations, closely followed my every action. Marian told me that they were some of her spiritual companions to whom she had related a few of my anomalous doings when in the spirit form. She had evidently allowed them to visit me when in their world, and upon this occasion three of them were present. Marian afterwards intimated that one of them would, in the not very distant future, be of important

service to us in developing my powers ; further than this nothing was said.

On one occasion my companion left me solitary, but not disconsolate, upon some distant world, merely by way of education. I wandered about in a thoughtful frame of mind, if a double has the capacity to be thoughtful ; at least, I was cautiously watching and feeling for new ideas. Probably I was leisurely moving in a forward direction, for all at once I was disturbed from my reverie by seeing many spirits of the frivolous class in front of me. Just as quickly again my mind reverted to its previous thoughts, and I continued on in my course, when suddenly I felt their presence once again in a very unmistakable manner, and was rudely aroused to my senses. They were right in front of me, so I looked at them just in a way that any curious person would do, then mechanically made an effort to proceed on my journey once more, but found that I did not move. Astonished at this I glanced around, and saw that they had surrounded me on all sides. "Aha ! so this is what's the matter, is it ? caught in a trap !" said I to myself. It was cleverly done, and I could see them laughing at the joke they had played on me. Somehow, I never got frightened, for I had no material body to take care of now, so no fear of injury. Like a flash it struck me that I could return to my body and leave my double to take care of itself. I did so, and found it an easy way out of a tight corner. Presently, I returned to my double again, and wandered about in search of my companion.

The desire then seized me to see if I could discover the limits of this region, so I, as it were, threw myself down, down, and at last reached what was a limit. Further I tried to go but could not ; however, there was no satisfaction at all in this procedure, and I felt a terribly long way from my body. A sense of loneliness then came over me, for indeed I was lost, and my powers were rapidly on the wane, so I returned to my body.

Human curiosity does not seem natural in this region,

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and whenever it presented itself uppermost in my mind, and I indulged therein, it always led me into a wrong channel, and invariably ended in trouble. Thus my curiosity was never satisfactorily gratified, but it was so completely quelled that I have no further desire to indulge it in the same direction. I was slowly but surely discovering in which way I could gather information, hence my exploits on my own account were not entirely without benefit.

During this time I had learned much from Marian, as well as from Minerva ; for what the former could not explain the latter never failed to. The idea occurred to me, why had not any person upon earth in the past thought to personate his double and visit the spiritworld ? I knew that many strongly magnetised men developed the power of their doubles to the extent of obtaining information by means of such power invested in such doubles, and I asked Minerva the reason why attempts of this nature had not heretofore been made.

Minerva lucidly explained to me that man knew of " the double " in but a vague way, if at all. Such persons as developed their doubles were ignorant of the true state of affairs. Many men, no doubt, had educated their doubles to collect information, but they could only employ their power to advantage over some other person who was weaker in will-power. " But," she went on, " your condition is an entirely new one to my knowledge. You are allowed to personate your double for a reason you will soon realise. Power is given you for this purpose, as well as an instructor to teach you, so that your work may be properly discharged. You see, therefore, that you are essentially different from any experiment ever worked before. You know that your interests are alone centred upon the mysteries of this advanced world. You never think of inquiring into earthly affairs of men. Your power is used to the advantage, not the detriment, of your fellow creatures. Other men who possess doubles will no doubt try to personate them by their presence,

and attempt to follow your example, but none will be successful unless power be specially allowed them as in your case. Undoubtedly yours is a mysterious condition, supernatural to the powers of man, and hence beyond his ability to work."

The experiences recorded in the foregoing chapter took place in the months of October and November 1900.

CHAPTER III

UNDERGOING DEVELOPMENT

AFTER the experiences recorded in the last chapter some months elapsed before the desire as well as the ability to personate my double returned. During the intervening time all power to assume this remarkable condition was in abeyance, and I was left to reflect upon my past experiments.

I am endowed with the same properties which are common to all mankind, so naturally I was astounded at what had previously happened to me. The journeys I had undertaken, when my mind reverted to them, were distinctly pictured in my brain, and, although I had been, in a sense, inducted to a knowledge of the supernatural for some years, still I could not fail to appreciate them in their real light. To myself, in my normal state, they appeared almost incredible, but upon mature consideration, when I remembered that I had been slowly educated up to my present condition, that the powers I possessed were natural to myself, that what I had seen and felt were present before me in a very vivid light, and that all the explanations given me on abstruse matters were extremely feasible, I came to regard the whole as stamped with the hall-mark of truth, and precisely what the present-day intelligence of man is yearning for concerning advanced subjects, so vaguely and indefinitely understood in the past.

During this interval of direct communion with spirits, in my thoughtful moods, I reverted to the past, but gradually the remembrance of it vanished before the paramount attractions of an earthly existence and its

interests. These latter were natural to the brain, hence constantly prominent. Daily duty and planning for one's future material prosperity demand the mind's attention, and physical exhaustion consequent upon one's daily work precludes all thoughtful meditation upon a subject so obscure and engrossing as this one is. Once or twice, in my eager moments, I made the attempt to personate my double as in the past, curiosity alone prompting me, but I cannot say that I had any great inward desire to do so, and the effort was a forced one when I did make it. I knew instinctively that it would be impossible to succeed without power, and was also fully aware that for the time being such power had been withheld ; still, my curiosity had its own way, with marked failure as the result.

I really never ceased holding communion, slight though it was, with those spirits who were as directly interested in these remarkable operations as myself. Minerva very seldom visited me, and when she did come she had practically nothing to say. She would not inform me when she was going to resume the work, always cleverly turning my questions on this subject into some unimportant channel, so that I was compelled to let things rest as they were until such time as my tutors determined to resume operations.

Nevertheless, I was ever gaining knowledge on spiritual affairs, either by reassurance, or upon some small point that cropped up in course of conversation, for Marian was very frequently beside me. Her mission was more particularly to guide me in my journeys, but she possessed the power to converse with me, and was also endowed with such other qualities as were necessary to assist me in developing those senses brought into play in my dealings with spirits, such senses as cannot clearly be explained to any who are not brought face to face with these delicate situations.

I was ever troubled by the presence of evil around me, to such an extent as to balance my peculiar privilege to

the average, so naturally I was influenced to a greater or less degree according to circumstances. I was so placed that I had to do many things which were not conducive to the proper development of my power—indeed, rather tended in the opposite direction. Life upon a big ranch, amongst cattle, with all its worries and forethought, as well as hard work, is no fit occupation for one who is called upon to educate his higher mental faculties.

At last, interest in my past remarkable experiences again became pronounced. I could better converse with Marian, and my mind naturally reverted to the subject to such a degree that I would frequently ask her questions upon different points that interested me, for almost mechanically I was once more becoming acquainted with my lost senses.

Upon a second occasion the thought struck me that I might as well make an attempt to become my old incomprehensible self again, and certainly I succeeded in assuming another form in an unknown region, but in all respects the effort was feeble, just enough to say that I had personated my double. It was under very exceptional circumstances that I made this experiment, and exhibited eagerness to do that which I was well aware could not be accomplished alone. The circumstances were of course spiritual, and my interest was aroused to such a pitch that I could not restrain myself any longer.

It must be remembered that it is contrary to natural laws for material man to mingle with spiritual beings ; some power, therefore, was evidently at work in my brain creating the desire to do that which is foreign to my normal condition. In every instance when I do successfully personate my double there is something besides curiosity or will-power which countenances such an unparalleled proceeding, a power much stronger and more subtle than any allowed man in his every-day life. Curiosity, and a wish to appear singular, no doubt, very frequently are the reasons why man in a general way is wishful to hold

communion with spirits, but in my case special power is allowed in order to bring about a definite and important result.

In the past my dealings with spirits had undoubtedly been forced upon me, and I knew the responsibility as well as the unsatisfactory (from an earthly point of view) and dangerous associations connected with such dealings. I had no fear for myself personally, but I had a lingering, deep-rooted suspicion that I was incapable of doing the work to the satisfaction of all. I fully realised that I was trafficking with powers literally enshrouded in mystery—mystery unappreciated and undreamt of by man! In my case it was that of an inferior existence traversing the limits of a much superior vitality, and the huge dark chasm which marks the boundary between such entities was of itself something not to be thought of lightly before undertaking the journey. I had no craving to learn more than what concerned my future welfare, and for that purpose I was already well supplied with information, so I looked upon my future work as a duty which I was called upon to discharge for the ulterior benefit and advancement of my fellow creatures.

It was not by any means all plain sailing; many uncomfortable conditions I had to submit to in the exercise of my gifts which resulted in peculiar kinds of headache and vertigo. My mind was much unsettled; my physical frame was also a sufferer from the hypernatural strain to which I was subjected, so that I was frequently unfit for my daily avocations; my whole body would tremble from exhausted nervous energy, and my mind at times would become a perfect blank. Still, through all this I was content, and ever ready again to do my bidding. There was that power within me which prevented my thoughts from dwelling upon my condition, and I would prosecute my researches until I was compelled to take a rest, then again in a few days I would resume them until once more I became exhausted. Fortunately I am not of an excitable disposition, otherwise I fully believe that

it would have been impossible for me to undergo what I did except at very considerable inconvenience to myself, as well as with the exercise of immense power on the part of my instructors. As it was they had a difficult duty to discharge, dealing with flesh and blood when they themselves were far above it ; sure, no such task would be taken in hand by faithful spirits unless they were so commanded, for they are not curious, nor yet are they desirous to exert their power unless their missions require them.

One night I was suddenly aroused by the abrupt remark : " Now, sir, you must join us in your spiritual self." It came in the middle of a conversation which I was holding with Marian, and instantly I knew that it was Minerva speaking. It certainly was very unexpected, for I had not been thinking about the subject, or even anticipating a resumption of my spiritual work for some time to come. Of course I was surprised, and expressed a doubt about my ability to personate my double, for the attempt I had made a few weeks previously had been a pronounced failure. However, I was assured that I could accomplish it, and the only way to prove it for certain was to make the attempt. This I did, and was successful to a degree, quite as much as I could expect, considering that my powers had been unexercised for such a length of time.

Minerva informed me that the present experiments were directly intended to develop my powers to a greater degree ; that such development was absolutely necessary before anything more would be permitted, and that at some future date my spiritual duties would begin in earnest.

Forthwith, I applied myself to educate my supernatural brain properties, for once across the abyss the old feeling came back again, fresh and strong. During the short while that these exercises lasted, I learnt much concerning my spiritual self, its powers and its senses. It had long since become evident to myself that I was a

highly endowed person in certain respects, inasmuch as I possessed a large measure of those senses which allowed me to deal directly with spirits, but these senses, I fully believe, were gradually educated from the normal properties natural to man, slowly improved by being brought in contact with advanced conditions. Minerva had at various times informed me that she was personally developing my brain ; still, I never had an exact idea in which way, but it necessarily must have been in those properties of which she had need in the discharge of her mission.

At the outset of my acquaintance with the spiritual existence I had been several times told that I should see spirits, hence in my ignorance I naturally expected to behold them with my material eyes, but never once was I gratified in this way. I saw lights when least expecting them, sudden and intense, but certainly not through my normal vision. Again, this development would assume a different form ; my eyes would be closed, and myself apparently suddenly on the verge of sleep, when I would be surrounded by a bright light, so intense in luminosity as to be incomparable with any material brightness. It was of a kind quite new to me, also it was evidently in my brain that I saw and felt it, and there was always an intense feeling of peace associated with it. It did not last long, but it left a marked impression upon my mind. I was also given visions in my sleep, visions clearly distinct from the incoherent wandering of the brain in an ordinary dream. They were well defined and very impressive, and were a distinct study in themselves. I invariably awakened up after them, as the result of the power exercised in the giving of the vision. They were probably very short, and I am satisfied that they always had some moral in them, or were the foreshadowing of some event, but the interpretation was left to myself to diagnose. I paid but little attention to them, but they distinctly showed and reminded me that I was in the hands of a being more powerful than myself, the subject of some advanced spirit

bringing to my remembrance the fact that I was a very dependent existence indeed.

Again, when I was told that I should see spirits at some future time, I naturally inferred that it would be when awake, so that I could thoroughly investigate them, feel them, talk with them, and generally satisfy my inherent curiosity. How ignorant I was then ! Now I do see them, but, oh ! far differently from the way in which I expected.

Further, to my great surprise, Minerva informed me that I should be taken into the spiritworld, and see and understand many things. This I pictured as myself in a long deep trance, perhaps on the verge of death ; then I imagined that I would become existable in the spirit-world, there probably for a few days, exploring the unknown region and gleaning astounding facts, then back again, myself as usual. Such ideas ! how amusing they are to me now ! and in no respect in keeping with the reality. In those halcyon days of ignorance and imagination what troubled me most was the difficulty I should have in remembering what I had seen in my aerial flights, and the impressions stamped upon my semi-comatose brain.

The way in which it has happened, the only method which could possibly have been adopted, taking all the circumstances carefully into consideration, is the one which has been followed so that the work could be reasonably accomplished. The ultimate result of my investigations I can only surmise, for I am never told beforehand what is going to happen. Whatever comes, comes suddenly, impressively, and so in harmony with common sense that I never can find any footing for doubt. Any point upon which there is the slightest ground for doubt or argument is completely settled by my instructor in a few words, and so simply is it explained that I wonder at my own want of perception in not having seen it for myself. It is all information on one side, and a dull, limited brain on the other. It makes me recognise the

genuine authority of my tutors; authority which is knowledge upon an entirely new basis, one upon which the mind is quite incapable of dwelling for long, for there is, and always must be, that cliff of mysteries ahead. The foreground of knowledge may be enlarged, but that ever mysterious cliff must loom up in the distance.

Very puzzling thoughts concerning my presence in the spiritworld caused me a great amount of consideration, yet a few words from Minerva set my mind completely at ease.

“You have a double,” she said, “very greatly endowed by development. To this double is allowed the power to retain the greater section of your life’s properties and presence, when required to prosecute your researches. The larger proportion of your presence being thus in the spiritworld, this double is given an undeveloped spiritual body which acts as the power to keep the life and its properties there. This spiritual body is not quite on a par with a newly passed-over spirit, because not all the soul’s powers are permitted to enter it. It is this spiritual body which you have to develop so as to be able properly to begin at the bottom. The information and impressions which this spiritual form receives are transmitted to your brain, with which it is connected. Your brain, being the lesser endowed centre, is the limit of your understanding, for what the brain cannot acknowledge under the laws of human reason cannot be accepted by your spiritual existence as at present constituted. It is your brain which seeks the information. Your attention and presence are practically in this spirit form, still your body, if disturbed, is alive in all its senses. A noise, cramp, or any interruption arouses you to the fact that your body, although for the time being almost dormant, is still an important agent. Your brain is not always in that settled state so essential to harmony; this, as well as the ever increasing desire on the part of the brain to bring back your presence, distinctly proves that you are by no

means a complete spiritual form. Your brain is temporarily deprived of its accustomed vitality when your senses are present with your double, so in obedience to the natural law of compensation, the restorative power of nature, it sets to work to amend such loss, and this is evidenced by the constant yearning of your presence in the spiritual form to return to your body, until at last your brain simply tears away from your double its borrowed senses. Sometimes that portion of your soul in the spiritual body is deprived of all power and senses, and is aware of nothing save the constant reminder of the brain to return. You not unfrequently linger in this condition in the spiritworld, perfectly powerless, and totally unable to investigate, but directly you return in your entirety to your body you are yourself again, its vitality is almost instantly restored."

This appeared to me a very lucid explanation of an extremely abstruse proposition, and I thanked her for it. She had not the slightest difficulty in explaining her meaning ; her remarks were over in a moment, and the impression left in my brain was clear and emphatic, much more so than I can ever hope to explain in written language.

When I do return to my body, after taking a deep inspiration and assuming a more comfortable position, my mind at once reverts to the wonderfulness of all that I have gone through, and it dawns upon me in my material condition as being infinitely more astounding than when I underwent it in the spiritual form. Then it seemed so natural and in place, now it appears supernatural and astonishing. A complete remembrance of what has taken place is at my disposal, at the very forefront of my memory, but everything has a duller aspect than what it presented in the spiritworld. The connection between double and body is one of instantaneous communication, and it is difficult to realise that the information has probably travelled millions of man's miles. This must be so, for I always go into the heart of the sphere, for there

it is that I obtain the best success : why ? I know not, except that thereabouts I am free from interference and the influence which the presence of evil and curiosity imparts. Distance makes not the slightest difference as far as the power of connection is concerned, but upon this point there is still a great field for discovery. It is evident to myself that before I can learn much more upon this intricate subject my newly awakened powers must be considerably developed, for in them lies the revelation of the spiritual existence, hence to this end I must devote my attention.

The mysteries I investigate are just as mysterious to me as they are to any person barely acquainted with spiritual life, for now that I have learned more than the mere rudimentary facts of such condition the finer and more abstruse points rise in hundreds where one appeared before ; they rise in clouds whichever way I look.

I am told that my investigations after information will be governed by the capacity of my brain, or in other words, will be just as much as my material brain can comprehend and express in language. The brain can grasp more than it is able to expound in words, so that what I am in a position to impart in written language will be the limit of the knowledge that I can convey to others.

Of course I shall be helped in my explanations, for my work is not complete, the missions of my tutors also are not complete, until this is effected. I am merely the medium, the human means, by which they intelligibly discharge the duties entrusted to them. A human subject was absolutely necessary considering the extreme points of difference between the two living conditions. The inferior or earthly condition had necessarily to be elevated to the same level as the superior or spiritual, as far as the distinct and limited characteristics it possessed would allow. I had to begin my tuition below the level of a newly born spirit, for my powers are not completely present in my spiritual form.

I am encumbered by a dull, material brain, which for

many reasons makes progress extremely slow. The time that I spend in the spiritworld is very limited, so that what would take me years to learn would, no doubt, be acquired in a very short time by a newly born spirit ; and if the information which spirits obtain during their sojourn in the spiritworld is a mere nothing, what must mine be in comparison ?

I have already stated that in all my works I am governed by my brain, therefore, I naturally seek to satisfy the desires of that brain. It is the channel through which every impression and idea has to pass. It is a brain of earthly properties, hence its queries and desires are of a sort befitting the human instinct and nature, consequently I believe that my investigations will be of a kind not altogether the same as those made by newly-passed-over spirits, for their properties are far different, but will be more in keeping with material requirements.

The mission which Minerva is at present discharging, as well as the other previous ones she has already completed, is to enlighten man, to reveal to him intangible realities which he is now able to understand, to bring his religion on a par with his intelligence, and to readjust the balance of equality, so that all men at all times shall have an equal chance of heaven. She has studied the where-withals to satisfy the requirements of her present mission, and as it is of a nature earthly, so the fruits of it will be of a kind alone particularly beneficial to mankind.

Further, it would be impossible for me to gather information that is not generally in keeping with man's desires, for through my brain I am alone curious to search for, and, indeed, am only satisfied with such information. Knowledge that cannot be sought after by my brain I cannot find out, for the power to search is not there. I am never told what I am not seeking to learn, and as certain points arise in my mind they are almost spontaneously solved in my wanderings. Again, of the two conditions I possess it is much more satisfactory for me to gather information in my spiritual form, for the

explanations then received are altogether more clearly defined—to see and hear is to believe; to feel is to be assured!

My first experience after such a lapse of time was naturally not very successful. My development was such that I could only converse upon simple topics. The improvement that had previously been effected had now, for want of use, all but disappeared, so that it was almost like beginning anew, still, I had more confidence in myself. However, I could not remain long in the spirit-world, for all my powers deserted me and returned to my body.

The next night I made a second attempt, which was as satisfactory as could be expected. I could unmistakably feel my companions, but my vision was still markedly at fault. I could but indistinctly see spirits, although I felt them perceptibly, and could easily discern them through this latter property.

Whilst engaged in an interesting conversation with Marian a bright light suddenly flashed up in front of me, which from its power and attraction I at once knew to be Minerva. There is no walking in this world, for there is nothing to walk upon, nor yet is there any material body to drag along wherever the soul and its powers wish to go. Each movement is instantaneous, and is accomplished with the thought of doing it, and no sensation of surprise is felt when a bright light suddenly develops in front of one, for such a thing is quite natural to this world.

Minerva stated that as the tutoring which I was now undergoing was simply to develop my power, so any experiments made were but to further that object, and not for information. She also informed me that a new strange spirit had been sent to me some time ago, and that this spirit now wished to introduce himself. He had just come on duty, and would himself explain his presence and office to me. But as I was not very anxious to cultivate fresh acquaintances just then I rather hesitated

about interviewing this stranger. I considered that my instructors, and the few other spirits with whom I communed, were quite as many as my limited powers could comfortably tolerate ; however, as this spirit evidently had something important to say I felt myself in duty bound to listen to him, therefore, I agreed to interview him when I returned to my bodily condition, for there I had full command over all my senses.

On my return this stranger at once put in an appearance and introduced—himself? in a clear and reasonable way. At first he made no reference to what his intentions were, and all my hints were smoothly disregarded. Apparently he first wished to exercise his conversing powers until he was able to use them fluently and feelingly.

At last he approached the subject of his visit, and asked me in which way I most required help. I thought for some time, and concluded that the question must have reference to my spiritual doings, but, as I was to all appearances progressing satisfactorily to myself, I replied that I could not think of any direction in which I did require assistance. This answer, of course, amounted to saying that I did not know my own self, so I put the question to Minerva, who quickly responded that I sadly needed help in an entirely new direction ;—to teach me the best way in which to develop my spiritual body. It then dawned upon me that one endowed with the power necessary to effect this would be of great service to me in many respects, for in the past it had been left entirely to my own instinctive powers to educate my spiritual properties. A spirit empowered with the mission to instruct me into the mysteries of my spiritual body, and to show me how to develop its different properties, I concluded, would be a great acquisition.

At the outset of my exploits I had only been told what to do, and since then I had been left alone. No new development beyond a bare existence in the spiritworld had been allowed me. I saw this clearly now, though

such a thought had never struck me in the past, still I knew how very necessary it was for my own benefit, before I could make much headway amongst such advanced conditions, that my powers should be improved.

The advent of this new spirit aroused in me fresh vim, and opened my eyes to the many directions in which I required development. Whether this spirit had obtained his mission through Minerva's instrumentality or not I cannot find out for certain, but as she is my tutor, and the angel entrusted with this entire work, so, no doubt, her helpers are granted at her own request.

It is a custom upon this earth to have names by which to distinguish people, so I quite naturally inquired of this stranger what his name was, but for reply he evasively talked all round the point, and finally wound up with the statement that a name was unnecessary, as he had none. I then tried to find out his earthly name, but to no purpose, also whether upon earth (he ? !) was man or woman. To this question, as well, I got no satisfactory reply ; either this spirit had forgotten or did not want to remember, hence the conversation on this point ended where it began, and I was no wiser ;—he was a stranger to begin with, and a stranger he remained.

I should like here to observe that this question of sex and names of spirits is one of the most difficult and unsatisfactory points against which a recorder has to contend. In ninety cases out of a hundred one cannot obtain the name of a spirit, nor yet the sex, the knowledge of which seems gradually to fade away after the material body is left behind, for such are essentially only earthly conditions and associations, hence it is very difficult to know what pronoun to employ when alluding to spirits. Indeed, there is no proper pronoun in man's vocabulary strictly applicable to a spirit, for a spirit is an eternal soul in a certain temporary phase, and as such is neither male nor female ; sex is a property peculiar to the material body only, not to the soul. It is a new condition altogether, one which man has never hitherto

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been called upon to deal with, hence he has no word to suit the occasion. In registering dealings with spirits, therefore, I consider that the recorder is at liberty to use the pronouns "he," "she," and "it," indiscriminately, just whichever he thinks fits the case.

The next time I crossed the abyss this stranger freely conversed with me, explaining many useful points in the development of my spiritual endowments. Since then he has seldom communed with me, as his duty does not call for any remarks, his work not being to consult with me, but to act, to employ his power so as to enable me the better to investigate in my spiritual form.

The arrival of this assistant marks a new epoch in my occult researches. Slowly but perceptibly the result of his work is becoming manifest in every respect. Most particularly is the improvement noticeable in my vision power, so that the satisfaction I derive from my visits to the spiritworld is distinctly more gratifying than was the case before his arrival.

It will be seen that I am now tolerably well provided with instructors. First comes Minerva, with her great power and knowledge. She is the angel to whom the management of this work is entrusted. She is the head of the mission, one of the most powerful angels in the Fifth Sphere, and my most important and impressive teacher. Second, comes Marian, who is my companion and guide in my visits to the spiritworld. As companion, her duty is to be in frequent attendance upon me so as to arouse my interests to a spiritual level, and generally to supervise my actions. As guide, she arranges beforehand the journeys which I have to undertake, accompanies me upon these journeys, explains all spiritual conditions we meet, and answers all my questions. Third, comes this stranger, whose province is solely to develop and superintend the development of those mental and spiritual properties in me essential to the adequate performance of this work. His mission begins and ends

here, for he is in no other way connected with my investigations.

The personation of my spiritual form was made much easier after this new help had taught me which was the most advisable way to transfer my powers into my double. Several experiments were tried, all of which have proved beneficial, and I found that I could remain longer away from my body without much discomfort. The improvement in my communicating power also was greater than ever I anticipated. I could converse as rapidly as my brain could translate, almost instantaneously when everything was right. My vision power, which in the past has been seriously defective, steadily improved, and my sense of knowing and distinguishing spirits also developed to such a degree as to leave no doubt in my mind as to the identity of such and such a spirit. It was no longer simply an impression of the individuality of any spirit, but certain knowledge. I also learned many interesting facts about the ways of spirits in their own abodes ; indeed, there was a general improvement all round.

Under these more educated circumstances the vast distinction between spirits and mankind became unmistakably apparent to me. The dignity that I noticed in them was a feature which impressed me forcibly. It is seen in all classes of advancing spirits, but is most noticeable when a spirit of a lower degree is in the presence of his superior ; still, there is never any attempt made on the part of the latter to take undue advantage of his more exalted position. It is solely a distinctive instinct which spirits possess to acknowledge those above them. Firmness is a feature very pronounced in spirits of the higher spheres, firmness in the sense of superiority and increased knowledge in the way of discharging duty, and as the extreme opposite to frivolousness. Friendliness is apparent in spirits of all classes when together. Love towards each other is the secret to spiritual happiness and peace, at least in that class of spirits with whom I

have been permitted to converse. Love with its concomitant virtues is the great feature in faithful spirits, and is always distinctly felt. There is no fear of being rudely answered, no matter how ridiculous the question. Answers are the essence of friendliness, firmly pronounced, with the dignity of the speaker always apparent. There is no such feature as charity amongst spirits that I can detect, nor yet is there any need of it, for all are past that state wherein charity is necessary. Sorrow is a property in spirits manifestly different from the sympathetic feeling of one man towards his suffering fellow creatures. Spirits feel no sorrow for those who are branded with evil, for as spirits they realise the true state of affairs, and its cause, hence they know it is not called for. Where sorrow makes itself felt among spirits it is sorrow with pure love at the bottom, which guiding spirits feel for their heavily tried subjects upon earth, when it is evident to them that these souls have burdens to bear which make life in the flesh almost intolerable. In their knowledge of the truth of the material life they realise what the exact properties of their subjects are, and if they are fighting manfully against what appears to be fate, sorrow then becomes manifest. Among guiding spirits sorrow for the above condition is frequently so real that their happiness is greatly affected, for their feelings are genuine, and never aroused without a serious cause.

Spirits have their instinctive powers precisely the same as man has, but earthly instinct is for self-preservation, whilst in spirits it is a law of distinction. Evil spirits never attempt to mix with faithful ones, and the latter instinctively take no notice of the former. Again, it is instinct in spirits to recognise immediately those advanced above them, but in the same classification as themselves. The above, and many other points, prove that spirits possess a sense corresponding with instinct in man. Instinct spiritually is law, and cannot be broken without a legitimate reason.

After several visits to this region of the First Sphere,

under the new conditions, I made great strides of improvement in my spiritual properties, when suddenly all desire for further research vanished, and for some cause a stoppage was put to my visits to the spiritworld.

A considerable time elapsed before I was again permitted to personate my spiritual form, and present myself beside my companions in the world in which they are working out their atonement.

My past experiences, indeed, were of little importance save to develop my supernatural powers, for no real attempt had been made to explore the unknown, and reveal new phenomena to me. My one effort had been centred upon the determination to improve myself, and to attain this end numerous small experiments were made, and repeated several times with my attention strictly upon each experiment. At the end of these trials I felt much more at home in my new incorporeal self, and the complicated spiritual body was to me more comprehensible, more tangible, and yet more complicated than ever. Thus I was elevated to a plane from which it was possible for me to gain a clearer insight into the spiritual existence and its wonderful attractions. But now that the work had abruptly stopped I seldom thought much about it ; still, I was fully aware that I had just begun my labours, and that explorations were yet before me almost endless in their dimensions. I knew that what my limited and inferior properties would allow me to grasp would be, comparatively speaking, nothing, but even to obtain such information entailed ceaseless efforts and numerous visits.

The sense of feeling and impression, whilst in the spirit form, is difficult to explain, for it is quite new to me. The property of feeling is entirely different from that experienced by man on earth. When I personate my spiritual self my feeling immediately becomes one of happiness, for there is nothing to make me otherwise than happy, and as a rule I first assume this property in

that region at a spot free from all influences. Frequently I remain there drinking in the thrilling sensations, vague at first, but ever increasing in density and magnitude. A feeling of peace comes over me ; I am in no hurry at all ; somehow, not so eager as before I started out on the journey of discovery, for I know that the desire will manifest itself in due time.

Not unfrequently I look around on all sides of me, for it is the sensation of freedom in space which thrills me most ;—space surely is the word, for I am in space in reality ! Nothing of substance is visible, no heavy body to take care of, and the desire to look is the action of looking, for there is no wish first then an action before seeing.

Whilst I am thus engaged in realising the entire situation my attention is so completely absorbed that nothing seems to detract it from its then occupation, and I fully believe that I could remain in this delightful attitude for long were my bodily brain not so unsympathetic, so I am reminded of my duty. I then put my senses into operation and salute my instructors, who in their turn perform the very gracious ceremony of welcome. This is done in a spiritual fashion, and can only be explained in spiritual language. It is more of a feeling concentrated in their few words of welcome than any actual obeisance, yet they seem to bow smilingly. I have tried to perform this truly attractive salutation, but cannot quite understand the working of it, although I have the knowledge of having done it in my own peculiar style ; it is spiritual completely, therefore is unintelligible to the human brain. After this is done we begin to converse.

Spirits can commune with each other upon very trivial matters, if they so desire. It is an enjoyment to them, and so devoid of solidity are some of their communications that my brain cannot repeat them, for no impression is made for repetition. The currents of information are transferred from one to the other with such rapidity that the brain has not time to note them, or they may be of

such little importance that the brain cannot receive such slight impressions.

Pleasant pastime of this nature, however, never lasts long in the earthly sense, for all spiritual communications are clear and practically instantaneous, requiring no explanations.

When important communications are made to me they are transmitted much more slowly, for then my brain must receive and translate the impressions before I can reply. Sometimes I get ahead of my brain, and then everything goes wrong. The two powers of spiritual head-piece and material head-piece must act in unison one with another, for if not then one takes upon itself more than it is capable of handling, for my spiritual senses are depending upon my brain. If this were not the case my brain would know nothing, and all my sojourns in the spiritworld would be to no purpose.

During conversation my strict attention is centred upon the speaker, and all other senses are in abeyance until otherwise disturbed, or the conversation is ended. For example, when I converse with Minerva my whole attention is fixed upon her to the exclusion of everything else, or if two spirits are talking with me the two attract my full attention, and all outside interests vanish completely. All through it is a case of one thing at a time with me ; but whether this is due to my incomplete condition, or because it is natural to the spiritual existence, still remains for me to find out, but my firm impression is that the latter is the true reason, for it applies to everything I do when in that world.

When I wish to look at a spirit I concentrate my whole attention upon the vision power, and now that this property has improved so perceptibly I sometimes see splendidly, but what I do see is not what one would expect. There is no definite outline visible anywhere, for spirits are powers rather than forms, as one would naturally suppose. This power is evidenced in the brightness which surrounds the figure of each individual spirit with whom I have as yet

conversed, and the greater the brightness the more difficult it is to see the form of the spirit through it, hence it is not the figure which as a rule is seen, but the brightness or power enveloping it.

So far I have never beheld an evil spirit closely so as to be able to examine it carefully, hence I cannot now say from my own observations what appearance that type of spirit presents. I have certainly felt their influence near me, without having ever used my power to investigate them, but I know that the opportunity will come in its proper place. Heretofore, my desires for the most part have been concentrated upon my teachers, for until I am developed and know sufficient to appreciate what is shown to me it is impossible to expect to make headway.

When in Minerva's presence I feel completely different from what I do when alone, or even from what I do when alone with Marian, for her great powers have their effect over my inferior ones.

When by myself I fall back upon my own endowments, and then it is that I can best understand my remarkable composition.

My thoughts, when left alone, always mechanically wander back to the thrilling sensation of space and freedom, yet my freedom is not freedom at all, because my body is ever there waiting to draw me back. I feel it constantly urging me to return, and unless there is some strong counter-attraction where I happen to be it is difficult to remain. When my attention is excited I am more my spiritual self than ever, but slowly my powers become exhausted, until I find it a relief to return to my material self; still, the very idea of having to return makes me more anxious than ever to remain.

Before I attempt to personate my double it is necessary for me to concentrate my desires and will-power to a focus sufficiently strong to enable me to force myself into my spiritual body, and unless this can be satisfactorily accomplished success will not be the result; it is will-power alone which enables me to personate my new form.

Regarding my two conditions from an onlooker's standpoint, one realises that for me to become acquainted with my spiritual body, when only occupying it at intervals, and otherwise constantly immured in my material frame, with its limited properties, must be very slow progress, for the spiritual body I possess is an advanced composite structure, and nothing that I can find in it is the same as in my earthly body ; nevertheless, its properties are very simple when understood, indeed, even more so than my material properties. To understand them aright as well as to find out the capacity of their powers necessarily requires considerable experience. At present I am developing them to the best of my ability, or to put the case more literally, I am finding my footing so as to enable me to use them, then to explore their powers. Each portion of a power is in itself a complete study, but I cannot find words to express how such is the case.

From the knowledge I now possess of my complicated spiritual self I can but form a faint idea of what a powerful spirit must be like, in whom each of the powers is greatly developed, and capable of being brought into exercise when required, for they are utterly beyond comparison with material powers. If such, then, be the constitution of a spirit, what must Complete Power be ? Omnipotence ?

CHAPTER IV

INVESTIGATIONS BEGIN

IN the month of February 1902, I felt a reawakening in myself of my dormant spiritual desires, and became alive to the fact that new energy was being imparted to my advanced and mysterious properties.

This time I knew the effort would be in earnest, and that whatever immaterial secrets were now going to be revealed to me were directly intended for the edification of mankind. The period of my probation had passed, and the process of development had so far been completed that now I was considered in a fit condition to see, feel, and grasp, not only the reality but the importance of everything that was about to be imparted to me.

For several months past I had thought but little upon spiritual subjects. Whether this was due to the monopoly of my mind by earthly affairs, or through the direct instrumentality and interference of Minerva, in order that my mental and physical powers should be healthy and vigorous when called upon to resume this work, I am not prepared to say. The fact remains the same, however, that I was almost completely unable to concentrate my thoughts upon things supernatural; indeed, it was with difficulty that I even communed with Marian, and with any other spirits I was quite unable to converse, or they with me. Minerva very seldom was present with me, for she had nothing to communicate. She was anxious to resume her work, as was natural in such a strong and active mental constitution as that which Minerva possessed, but until the proper time arrived, her power to continue her mission had been withheld.

Now that time had arrived, and activity became suddenly apparent in both instructors and pupil.

I made my *début* once again in the spiritworld in the usual fashion, and my immaterial self once more confronted its superiors. We mutually greeted one another in the customary elegant form, and forthwith began our duties.

No time is ever wasted when I visit the spiritworld, for duty is the first, last, and only reason for which I am allowed there.

I was told by Marian to remain in the position which I then occupied until ordered otherwise. My companions vanished, Minerva, Marian, and the stranger with whom I seldom conversed. Being then alone I instinctively gazed around for something of interest upon which to fix my attention. Spirits of all classes I beheld whenever I purposely looked for them. The appearance they present to the material brain, dotted about here and there like so many stars, is both anomalous and weird. There is no plane of substance in this world upon which all stand, no common level to act as a basis for all their actions and movements, and no laws of gravitation to keep them upon one base. There they stand or are poised in space, in all directions and at all distances, for the most part stationary and motionless.

In the midst of my contemplation upon this strange sight I was suddenly bidden to advance. No spirit was near me, but I knew that the command came from Minerva. The thought of disobeying her never struck me, so I moved forward. I stopped in front of a large gathering of spirits, arranged in a line like a regiment of soldiers, and was ordered to pick out my companions who had recently left me. Forthwith I started at one end, and looked into the countenance of each one. I knew Minerva the moment my gaze fell upon her; it was no question of thought, it was knowledge, instinctive knowledge, as I can best explain it. With the others it was exactly the same, and I had no more difficulty in

detecting my new guide than I had with Minerva or Marian.

“You see,” said Minerva, “your powers don’t fail you when put to the test.”

Certainly I had picked them out in but a very short time, despite the fact that my powers had not been exercised for some months.

This was the only experiment then tried upon me, for it was not thought advisable to tax my powers too much upon my first visit.

Upon returning again to my bodily condition I reviewed with wonder the glimpse of spirits I had obtained, isolated in all directions, and having no regard to the laws of gravitation. I further remembered that they all stood one way, and I mused as to whether it would be possible to lie down or stand upside down with the same ease and the same regard to the spiritual law of order.

The next time I personated my double and presented myself in the spiritworld I had this doubt settled once and for all. No sooner had I gone through the preliminary ceremonials than I saw a bright light of power suddenly visible over our heads. I looked up into this light in great surprise, at the same time feeling myself being gradually drawn upwards into the midst of it; then I glanced down and could distinctly see Minerva and Marian smiling at me as if enjoying my discomfiture. Soon I was upon my back, then head downwards, then turned and twisted in all imaginable ways, quicker and quicker! I was satisfied! no more experiments of that nature were of any interest to me.

Spiritual laws, I learned, are not laws of compulsion, similar to the material laws of gravitation, but are laws of order; beyond this I dare not at present say more, why their feet are downwards and their heads towards heaven, or why their limbs were so mysteriously handled. Their beautiful arms were extended for emphasis whilst explaining points to me; they never fell to their sides when not of further immediate use, but mysteriously

disappeared into their forms, into the brightness surrounding their figures, for in the class with whom I have dealings the figures are not definable.

This latter fact started an interesting problem in my mind, which as usual was easily explained.

Spirits are not known to each other by their outlines, nor yet by their countenances, but by a certain magnetic attraction which never fails to be correct. When attracted to each other the familiarity they exhibit is simple and beautiful, but quite inexplicable in words. In their conversation there is no selecting of words, no hiding of certain points and facts, no double meaning, no look of cunning, no thought of doubt. The whole to my mind is a complete language. It is a language of thoughts as well as of true meaning ; no fear of the listener, mistaking the meaning of the speaker, and second explanations are rarely if ever necessary.

Frequently I found that whenever my mind dwelt upon any line of thought, difficult or obscure, the explanation was soon forthcoming one way or another. The little I had pondered over the subject of spirits themselves, their outlines and their figures, was sufficient, and more information upon it was at once imparted to me.

Minerva showed herself to me in her full figure, in her earthly form, and I gazed upon her intently to discover some definite points by which I might distinguish her from other spirits, over and above that peculiar magnetic attraction which is the spiritual law of recognition. I could find none, but of a sudden I saw a prim foot put forward, no attempt whatever being made to walk ; then I beheld a figure clad in human guise, with dark gray hair, and white head-dress with ends down the back. She appeared very stately, of great intelligence and will-power, and altogether a carefully precise figure, just what I expected her to have been.

I gazed steadily upon this sight until it slowly disappeared into that mysterious spiritual form again. Aroused to interest by what I had just seen, I turned my

attention upon my own personality, and did my best to examine my own individual properties. What did I find ? No muscular system at all, and total inability to advance step by step. I saw my arms and hands, and thought that I recognised them as my earthly property, but quite devoid of feeling and the power natural to human limbs. No gravitation to draw them down when I had ceased to require them any more ; they simply vanished, I know not where, still, there they were, ready again when next I required them.

This interesting occupation ended I was told to advance until ordered to stop. I did so, slowly moving forward, ready to halt immediately when required. When I did stop and turn round it was more by compulsion than of my own free will, and instantaneously, without effort. I was now facing my two teachers, but at some little distance from them. Not knowing what to anticipate I was on the tiptoe of expectation, and what I did witness was an impressive spectacle to behold. It was the figure of Marian, beautiful in the extreme, but totally different from any human form. Clearly I can recall the sight to my mental vision, but words can do no justice to such a spiritual picture. She was a mass of beautiful bright light, more especially about the head ; the arms were outstretched and stood out distinct from the body. Further than this there was no clearly defined outline, for the light was too intense for any shapely form to be seen to advantage there, and where the figure really should have been there the brightness was greatest.

The appearance she presented was in every respect a pleasing spectacle, and what is more, it seemed quite natural and in keeping with the region and condition I was then in, but how very much out of place on paper is such description ! The light was soothing to look upon, and its warmth, pureness, and engaging aspect were extremely satisfying to my less privileged mental properties. This is, I understand, the appearance which spirits present to each other ; it certainly is most charming, and

very suggestive of the happy condition in which progressing spirits exist. Still, probably, I have not yet seen them as well as I shall in the future, for I notice that as my knowledge of this electric world increases so do my spiritual powers improve.

The next time I was summoned to duty in my immaterial self I readily acquiesced. The first thing to be done on meeting my smiling fellow labourers, for we are all working out our own ends, was to go through the customary form of salutation, which the more I practise the less satisfactorily do I perform. Somehow, it does not become my awkward, incomplete structure similarly as it does my more advanced companions. There is a lack of grace and refinement in my movements which I am conscious must be very pronounced, and which cultured actions are so pleasing to witness in others. Then I began to compare the marked difference in our appearances and in the circumstances in which we were respectively placed, self evident though these were, still they did not strike me as being such until I returned to my material condition, and viewed them through the impression they had left upon my brain.

Everything I see in that world looks so natural to me when there, and quite in keeping with what I should expect, if only I could form an opinion beforehand. But no, it is not by the brain's own thoughts that man improves and progresses, or one would be able rapidly to acquire much more knowledge than one does, and the world would have been in its present advanced condition ages ago. The brain itself cannot originate a thought ; this I now know for certain, and experience has slowly revealed to me the truth of what is written in Minerva's works upon this subject.

On this occasion I was privileged to witness a very remarkable spectacle indeed, almost incredible at first sight, but very graphic and lucid when explained. I was wholly taken by surprise at what I did behold, for, although the point had been defined to me more than

once before in spiritual language, still, the very reality of the condition had never even dawned upon me.

We stood; and Minerva, after a few preliminary remarks, said:

"Now, sir, I am going to show you a new wonder, something entirely different from any sight you have yet witnessed."

I waited with my earnest attention fixed upon her. Suddenly a bright light appeared above her form—evidently there for a purpose. Minerva the while was standing motionless with one arm upstretched, and her hand pointing upwards towards the light. As I intently gazed upon this beautiful spectacle, a bright light suddenly darted out from her form, upwards into the power above, then descended again in the form of Minerva with upstretched arm, and stood by her side. Still Minerva remained fixed in the same attitude; then another figure shot out from her into the light above, which in its turn descended in the shape of Minerva with upstretched arm, and took its position also by her side. Again and again this was repeated. I looked on in amazement! Not a word was spoken to me although Marian was by my side. Strange thoughts flashed through my brain; was I gazing upon something real or was I not? were my faculties too weak and playing me false? I was overwhelmed with dismay!—was I mad?—but how could a double be mad? Still the forms went on increasing! I turned from the sight horrified, not knowing what to do or say. My senses seemed to forsake me, and I was in the act of returning to my earthly body for refuge, when I was requested to attend to what was going on in such a kind and reassuring way that I turned and faced Minerva once more. Still, sure enough, another form appeared in the same way, each one smaller than Minerva when her normal self. They were all spiritual forms of Minerva, and I demanded of her what the experiment meant; were these figures upon which I was looking real, or was I the victim of

some spiritual trick? "Look!" she exclaimed, and instantly she was herself again, and all the other forms had vanished. That satisfied me; my faculties returned, and I was once more myself.

"When will you learn to have confidence in yourself, sir?" Minerva remarked, rather irritably I thought, and not in her usual style of expressing herself.

I replied, "Such a sight as I have just witnessed seriously shook my confidence in my vision powers. My senses were dumbfounded."

"Have I not taught you self-confidence? and were you not completely satisfied only the last time you came here?"

"Oh, yes! but the circumstances in this instance are so very different from anything that I have ever previously witnessed. Tell me please—did I see correctly?"

"Sir! Your power of vision, here, is not to limit you like in your material body, but to see things invisible upon your world,—that is what you are here for."

"If I had but known what to expect then I could have prepared myself for it, but the spectacle was so unnatural, and so unlikely in my estimation to be correct that I feared my powers had belied me. But to explain this wonderful sight; were these figures part of yourself, for I perceived that they emerged from your form?"

"Ah, sir! I see that you never even counted them, nor yet noted the differences in them. Why, sir, do you not bear in mind your duty?"

"Now I see, Minerva! It was for some object you performed this mysterious feat. Well, I am ready to solve the riddle with your help, but I think I was excusable. I was taken quite unawares, for you know that I am still but a novice in this region. I lose confidence in my powers when highly supernatural phenomena are presented to my vision. Such conditions are never seen where I come from, as you well know—but pardon me, Minerva?"

"Well, sir; it was I who took you so sharply unawares.

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I do my duty—you must do yours ; to each of us there is a great difficulty, but duty is duty, and is God's will."

Here I was compelled to return to my body. This unlooked-for occurrence had really so unsettled my spiritual combination that it was necessary for me to retire to my body in order to collect my powers together again.

Minerva followed me, and presently observed : " You must yet solve this problem before you. It is an important point that has to be settled this night, so let us be going."

Again I returned to the region of wonders never to be fathomed by the soul when subjected as man. Again did I witness this remarkable sight, but on this occasion I was prepared, and looked on with deep interest, for I had been assured that I saw correctly. Once more the figures descended from above after flashing upwards. This time I noticed that three descended upon Minerva's right side, and four upon her left. Now that I observed them closely they appeared small figures, considerably less than Minerva's original self. Her real form, fourth from the right, was also as small as the others.

I looked at Marian for reassurance that they were really small, and she answered this look in the affirmative.

But which was Minerva's form now ? None answered to the complete condition, yet all appeared herself. The figure that once was herself I examined the most closely, but could find no difference in it from the others. I counted them ; there were eight figures in all, and I thought I noticed that the eighth figure was smaller than the first.

Again and again I examined them as best my powers would allow me, and sure enough each one, beginning from the right-hand end, was smaller than its predecessor. The spectacle was an impressive as well as mysterious one ! There stood eight Minervas ; all had emerged from one ; all were alike in appearance ; no one in

particular was Minerva herself, but the whole lot answered to my power of search for her.

I then retired to a distance and there reviewed them, but still no difference ; they were all herself, yet her original self was not to be found among them.

My curiosity was now settled ; still, the entire phenomenon was inexplicable.

I turned to Marian and asked her if she also possessed such power of subdivision. "Certainly, sir !" she replied. "If I find it necessary to perform the operation. Tell me, do you wish me to do it to enlighten you in any way ?"

"No ! no ! Marian, certainly not ! I have no desire to see you undergo such an ordeal in order to satisfy my curiosity. I am convinced that Minerva must have some purpose in doing this ; her explanations will be amply sufficient for me."

"Sir !—look at Minerva now !"

I was looking at her all the time, but now I brought the full force of my powers into operation. Yes, surely there was something to see ! for instantly all figures were absorbed into one again, and there was that wonderful, complicated spirit, Minerva, herself once more in all her power.

Now that my surprise had disappeared the entire performance seemed quite natural. I bowed to her, and exclaimed, "Wonderful !" yet, somehow, I instinctively knew that it was not wonderful. Of course I did not know any reason why it should appear natural to me, still it was what my spiritual condition naturally looked for.

I knew that what Minerva had just undergone could not be any trick to astonish me, nor yet, I felt sure, was she exhibiting her advanced powers to overawe me. She was incapable of such conduct. No, she had her reasons, that was certain, for I knew her well enough to be satisfied that she would not do what was not necessary. What her object was I felt curious to know, but did not

immediately press her for an answer. Best let it be approached by herself, for I had long since found out that asking questions in this world is no way to get enlightened. Questions are so very superficial, and subjects to be explained so huge that questions are of no practical benefit. Besides, they are difficult to ask; it is not natural for spirits to ask them when such abstruse and illimitable propositions are to be explained; and, again, if I commenced asking questions the answers were always very closely confined to a bare reply. At first in my experiences it was not so, but now I was under the necessity of learning the ways of spirits, for I was being more or less treated as one. Yes; my masters are developing me fast! doing just exactly as they please with me! so now I waited upon Minerva's will.

In the meantime we conversed upon other topics, and when conversation lulled my thoughts and vision naturally reverted to the marvels of space, and I compared them with solid mother earth, always under man's foot, and so much in evidence in the material brain. Such a subject is ever increasingly interesting to me:—space is so demonstrative of the eternal freedom which spirits enjoy, so explanatory of their condition, just as matter is almost synonymous with man!

I beheld Marian from different aspects to reassure myself that my already formed impressions were correct. I communed with her, if anything avoiding Minerva's presence until I knew that she was at liberty to explain. No doubt she was exhausted from having twice performed this fatiguing operation, and at first she conversed with me upon general spiritual topics. At last she began:

“Sir;—what did you see just now?”

“Minerva, that is a complex question to ask me point blank, but what I feel confident that I did see was yourself in eight forms, each in rotation a little smaller than the previous one. Your original form was, I am satisfied,

included in the eight, and all the forms were considerably smaller than your normal self."

"Correct, sir ; but did you not see more than that ? do you not also know more than that ? You see, I am fully acquainted with what you do and what you do not know. Did not all originate from one and reunite into one again, and make the original self complete ? "

"Yes," I replied.

"Again, you noted that three of the figures descended upon my right side, and four upon my left. Seven forms in all emerged from one, and that one still remained entire. Each form was a facsimile of the original."

"These figures were the component parts of myself—eight in number. The three largest upon my right side were the Powers of Faith, Will-power, and Love. The fourth was the Power of Existence, the home of them all. The other four upon my left were the Powers of Vision, Communication, Thought, and Decision. You have much to learn about these properties ; they are the powers of a spirit, each perfect in itself as perfection exists in a spirit. Those powers you saw are, then :

"The Power of Faith.

"The Power of Will-power.

"The Power of Love.

"The Power of the Spiritual Body.

"The Power of Vision.

"The Power of Communication.

"The Power of Thought.

"The Power of Decision.

"Such are the best earthly terms that can be applied to these powers. They are powers in themselves, separate and distinct from each other—no nerves to connect them ; no mixing up of properties ; all are separate.

"Your material body, like that possessed by each individual human being on earth, is composed of four powers. They are :

"The Power of the Soul or Life.

"The Power called The Body.

“ The Power that works the entire Physical System.

“ The Power that works the entire Nervous System.

“ The human being, you know, is a terribly complicated machine, where all the powers are blended into one, and connected together by nerves and other bonds of union. But in order to explain this subject the better, let us first picture man with his powers, and then compare them with those of a spirit.

“ Man with his four powers is a complex structure. These powers are inseparable, and are entirely dependent upon each other for support. None are complete, for they are not powers in reality, but senses, purposely limited to test the soul. All are bound together by the power called ‘ the body.’ This body alone is visible to man’s fellow creatures, and these powers cannot be separated until an angel is commanded to undo the binding. But, as you saw in my case, the powers are independent, and not connected with or relying upon each other as in man, and the spiritual body is the home of the lot, as I can best express it.

“ Now let us compare them : Man’s ‘ power of the soul ’ corresponds with the spiritual powers of faith, will-power, and love ; but these powers in a spirit are greatly developed beyond the power of the soul in man. Again, the soul is life, and life is the source of the powers of faith, will-power, and love ; consequently the soul is bound up in these properties to make them powers at all, thus they are ‘ the powers of the soul ’ ; but this subject will be better explained as we proceed. .

“ The power called by man ‘ his body ’ corresponds with the spiritual body, but the difference between the two is this—the body of the human being binds all powers together and limits the owner, while the spiritual body is best described as ‘ the home of the spiritual powers.’

“ The power that works the human body is represented in a spirit by ‘ the will-power.’ Here again there is a vast difference between the two ; but you must re-

member, sir, that we are merely drawing a comparison. The body requires power to effect any movement, for the body is composed of inanimate substance. Power is necessary to discharge the various functions of the body, for it has none of itself. For locomotion, also, power is required to resist gravitation, and other impediments to progress. In spirits will-power is quite sufficient, for there is no material body, no gravitation, &c. A wish to be at a place is to be there, as you have already discovered since you came among us.

“ The power that works the nervous system is limited to the brain and its accessories, hence is far from being perfect. Nay more, it is just sufficient to sustain them individually, and make the whole existable. In spirits the corresponding powers of vision, communication, forethought and reasoning, and decision are complete in their separate and respective directions.

“ Thus far but no further can the comparison be made, but oh ! it is difficult to connect human beings in any respect with spirits.

“ Now, sir ; you witnessed a sight which in itself proves that the properties of spirits are separate and distinct from each other. This operation can only be performed by spirits when necessity calls upon them to do so, but remember, I say it is almost never practised, for advanced spirits alone know that it can be done, and they never attempt it except duty requires them. It is through being possessed of distinct powers that a spirit can temporarily assume any form or shape. The power of will-power is the one which takes up the borrowed shape, but not the spiritual body as a whole.

“ Now let us consider each power separately—of the soul first.

“ ‘ The Power of Faith ’ is a property possessed alone by and developed in God’s true servants. In the spirit-world it has to be developed and increased until it becomes sufficiently powerful to be complete before a spirit is perfectly spotless ; it is then the most important part.

It is through this power that God recognises His servants, and only through it can the particular missions entrusted to faithful spirits be worked, and as this power is developed so do spirits themselves advance towards heaven. In myself it is the largest portion, as you see. In evil spirits the corresponding power is not that of faith, but of evilness. In faithless spirits there is no such power or its equivalent, hence here lies the real and deep explanation why faithless spirits never become complete, so never can enter heaven.* It is in consequence of this power (and its brightness) being absent in faithless spirits that they appear as dull bright spirits in the upper spiritworld, as compared with the intense brightness of faithful spirits.

“ ‘The Power of Will-power’ comes second in myself. You know by experience that I possess great power here ; indeed, were I not developed in this respect as I am, then my mission could not be satisfactorily and effectually discharged. Will-power is the power of doing or acting at will. To wish is to be ; to will that a mission shall be done properly is the secret to its final consummation. This is a very important power indeed, and may be said to be the controlling power over all the others.

“ ‘The Power of Love’ is indeed a beautiful power !—but not love as man knows it in his present condition. Spiritual love is of a deeper, truer nature altogether, and although I do not say that such is not to be found in man, still its presence is rare. Pure, earnest love in man is a power which makes itself felt through the brain, hence is limited. Love, as a power possessed by spirits, is the secret to their happiness—love of works, love of duty and of pleasure in due season, love of the Supreme Existence, love of all slights and doings in the spiritworld, love magnified to a degree when it is always to the front in duty as well as in leisure. Without this power spiritual life would not be complete.

* To be explained at length elsewhere,

“ ‘The Spiritual Body’ is not really a body as man understands the meaning of the word, but this term is the only one applicable when comparing the two. It is a body of power instead of substance, and all the other powers which it contains are separate and distinct. It is the home of them all, the power which makes the spirit existable as a whole. There is also in this body a portion of the life of the soul eternal, necessary to make it what it is. This body is ‘God’s power of lawfulness,’ overruling and restricting the spirit to the laws of the spiritworld.

“ ‘The Power of Vision’ is essential to a spirit, but it will scarcely bear comparison with its equivalent in man. This power is under the control of the will, and is capable of being restricted to seeing only what is necessary, or what is desired to be seen, hence the vision power enables a spirit to see or not see just as it chooses, either exteriorly or interiorly. It is brought into operation to observe important events, catastrophes, &c., whenever a spirit requires to have knowledge of such future incidents, but the lawful part of a spirit controls the whole, hence good spirits never see what is not necessary to be seen—indeed, they never make the attempt to do so. The vision of man as compared with this is the very opposite. Man opens his eyes and everything is seen, willing or not willing. Indeed, such an optical arrangement as man possesses is absolutely necessary to his condition, otherwise accidents would befall him unawares. Spirits, on the other hand, have no material bodies to protect, hence know no fear, nor yet are they inquisitive like man is, so their vision properties are suited to their requirements.

“Now, sir; herein lies the great secret to your one drawback, as you call it—your limited power of vision. You thus labour under two disadvantages: you are, in the first place, not yet properly developed; and in the second, you are but a semi-spirit, hence under the laws governing spirits, to which you are at present

subject, you cannot expect to possess the powers of a spirit in their complete condition.

“ ‘The Communicative Powers’ are those of knowledge and correspondence. You are well aware that these are not the most important powers of a spirit by far, still, they are great powers in themselves. Talking in your world is really a wonderful power, but it is very limited on account of the many complex and restricted properties of the brain. Nevertheless, for all that, man is satisfied with it for he knows of no other, and it ever affords him great pleasure to harangue his neighbours or give expression to his feelings, knowledge, and desires. A spirit communicates with another spirit, or imparts information to man, almost instantaneously. The knowledge which a spirit gains during its progress through the spiritworld is great, but still far from complete comparing it in its different stages with the condition of perfection it is eventually allowed to obtain. The power of knowledge is totally beyond comprehension by man, hence beyond my power to explain. God alone is Perfect Knowledge !

“ ‘The Power of Thought’ is not precisely the proper term, but it is the best we can do. It is the power of reasoning in man enlarged beyond recognition ; in fact, spirits have no need at all to reason with themselves. It is a power with many attributes totally unknown to man ; it is an instinctive power of the spiritual existence ; but in the present enlightenment of man it is quite useless to attempt to go further into an explanation of this power.

“ ‘The Power of Decision’ is a great one when known and employed correctly. Man is acquainted with it in but a very humble way, still the power is there. In spirits it is the power of certain knowledge obtained from work accomplished, thus enabling a spirit to decide the future method of his operations through the knowledge he has previously gained.

“ There, sir ! You have now the properties of a spirit

explained as far as your brain is able to receive them. Further I cannot go ; you know the capacity of your brain is one of my limits ; nevertheless, it allows of an explanation sufficiently explicit for mankind to ponder over. But beneath all that has been stated there is a deep underlying meaning which words cannot portray. Now let us return to your body as it is far spent."

On hearing this I was glad, for my powers were leaving me rapidly and I was in darkness. My brain was exhausted, and I was experiencing the result of such condition and on the verge of fainting. After return to my body I was soon all right again, except for a headache—not at all an uncommon occurrence now.

Once myself again my brain gradually awakened to a realisation of what I had undergone and witnessed. The wonder of it all arose as a picture in my mind, and impressed me in a most emphatic manner. When in the spirit form the phenomenon I had seen appeared quite natural, and the explanation of it beautiful and feasible, but now that it was being dealt with by my material brain how very complicated it at first seemed ; however, in time, after mature reflection, the reasonableness of it all struck me forcibly.

How that material brain of mine does handicap me in all my spiritual researches ! for what it cannot absorb when I am in my previous condition, that my spiritual form cannot recall to mind. Thus it is clear, that having two bodies, and being in two widely apart places at the same time, how sorely at a disadvantage one is. My spiritual mind in itself knows much more than my material brain, for, as a matter of fact, it is distinctly more intelligent, but the impressions made upon it when in the spiritworld are not sufficiently solid to lay hold of when I return to my material condition, for is it not my brain that is the medium necessary to translate the electric communications into words ?

For some little time I met with no experiences in the spiritworld worth noting down. For several reasons I

had not been able to command success in my visits ; probably the strain upon my brain powers during my last, long, and important interview with Minerva had been more severe than I was aware of, and consequent exhaustion was now the result. However, the next time that any interesting event happened was as follows :

Immediately after personating my spiritual form I knew that I possessed satisfactory control over my powers. First impressions are always to be relied upon, for if, as soon as taking possession of my double, I cannot control my powers, then I know that there is not much hope of success. Upon this occasion my first impressions were good, so that I was able to personate my spiritual form in a satisfactory way. The powers of this spiritual form seemed to me, on this visit, to be very definitely and closely connected with my brain, for it was not difficult to force more of my presence into it than I had previously been able to do.

According to my present custom I assumed my incorporeal properties somewhere in space a considerable distance away from my body, and it was very satisfactory once again to be able to appreciate a distinct improvement in myself. I took in my bearings as usual, noting the while the easy attitude of my form. In space once more—how entrancing ! how bewildering !

From my stationary position I beheld spirits in all directions whenever I chose to look for them. As I then saw them they were too far away for me to examine them closely, and further than that they were spirits I could not ascertain—probably of the frivolous or evil class. The shapes and general appearance of these native spirits were the same as I had always seen hovering about this region, but as yet I have not examined them beyond a casual glance at a distance.

The perspective view of spirits is that of forms more or less oval in shape ; the brightness surrounding each figure depending upon the position and quality of each spirit.

Again, the distant view of spirits is different from that noticeable when the same spirit is examined at close quarters, but as I have not yet quite satisfied my brain upon the exact properties of spirits, when communing with them, I shall not attempt a description at present. My spiritual self sees and recognises them without any difficulty, but in the past my brain has not been capable of receiving the impressions with sufficient strength to enable me to explain them as I should like.

The delicate spiritual organs, alone, cannot receive more than spiritual impressions, and these are not sufficient for material purposes. Further, the spiritual form is so completely different from what one naturally expects to see, that to describe it one must be very exact as to details, but so far my brain has not been completely satisfied upon these details. Indeed, I almost believe this point will never be explainable to a degree to do full justice to it. I am convinced that it is solely through the instinct of my spiritual body that I am able to recognise spirits so clearly, and even to tell their powers and attributes. Of one thing, however, I am certain, that my brain can always satisfy itself when evil spirits are close around me,—but to return to my duty.

Whilst in the midst of my meditations I was confronted by Marian, then Minerva came upon the scene in the same sudden and abrupt manner. The stranger, also, was there, but some little distance off. All parties immediately interested in this work were now in attendance, ready to begin operations again. My greetings performed, I observed :

“Minerva! Why does that stranger spirit always keep away from us in the distance?”

“Well, sir! He is not directly connected with our mission, so cannot be present unless his services are required. Look at him, and see if you can detect those properties about which you are so wishful to satisfy your mind.”

I did examine him very closely indeed, using all my

faculties to discover those features which are so natural to a spirit but incompletely recognisable by my brain. I also did my best to transfer the picture to my brain, but still the exactness of it did not get properly impressed.

"Well, Minerva," I replied, "I fear that I am not yet sufficiently developed, but I hope you will use your endeavours to accomplish this?"

"Ah, sir! Experience alone will develop you. When you have more control over your powers you will improve, and to this end I have arranged a little expedition for you to-night worth noting. You must traverse this region by yourself wherever you wish."

After a few remarks I started off. Upwards was the direction in which I determined to go, having all my senses keenly on the alert.

My curiosity was now to see whatever I could, and immediately I began to feel that I was getting further and further away from my brain. I must have wandered far and seen many spirits on the way, but they were all about the same in appearance, save a few here and there who were distinctly bright spirits. Whilst prosecuting this interesting journey, Marian suddenly stood in front of me. I knew her at once, and evidently she had been following me for a reason.

"Now, sir," she began, "you see you can derive great pleasure and satisfaction from wandering about by yourself, but let us return a little way."

"Why not go upwards, Marian, and see if we can learn something new? I wonder how far away we are from old mother earth? I guess, perhaps, millions of miles. What do you think, Marian?"

"Perhaps so; perhaps not! I am no judge. It is no matter, the intervening space is trivial to us now—even to you."

"Yes, I agree; but my brain likes to get at such points in order to form its own ideas."

Again I was seized with the desire to examine spirits, so I bid Marian retire a little to let me get a good look at

her, for those mysterious properties natural to bright spirits. Whilst I was thus deeply absorbed in the examination I saw Marian smiling at me, so instantly I stopped my inquisitiveness, advanced, and begged her pardon for such rude behaviour, but I reminded her that I was merely a reporter—and reporters are licensed individuals—and to do my work properly I must put myself into such anomalous positions.

“Yes, sir ; I see you are ever sticking at some point or another, but I tell you with pleasure that you are doing well, progressing satisfactorily.”

“I must admit that I am improving, Marian, but not so fast as I should like.”

“Ah ! You inhabitants of the earth live in such a hurry, work in a hurry ; you are limited to such a short existence—we are not ; therefore, as you are half-way between, pray, take your time, and your work will be all the better done.”

“Yes, Marian ; I am rapidly learning the truth of your remarks—never to be in a hurry when dealing with spirits. I can now realise that time is of no such value here as we upon the earth consider it, but you know, Marian, my sojourns here are short, and only at intervals.”

“Well, sir ; you need not trouble yourself upon that score, for you forget that you have still to visit this world very many times. Your work must be done, and the more time between each visit only defers the end. Time alone is the secret to perfect success in your present occupation.”

“Yes ; I note the point, Marian, and frequently in the past the same thought has struck me. Now I am satisfied that I cannot command success until my powers are properly developed, as well as allowed time to recover from any previous strain. At first I thought that I could come into this region regularly every night, but now I realise that time alone is the key ; however, there is a limit to the difference between being in a hurry and being too dilatory. I admit that I may have erred in

the former direction, but it is difficult to wait when one is anxious ; still, experience in the affairs of this world is cheap at any price."

" Yes, sir ! You are not now doing work that can be accomplished in a few attempts ; but here we are again in the presence of Minerva."

" Well, sir ! " Minerva began. " Had any success ? Ah, I see you are satisfied. Yes, you can go in any direction you choose, but it would be better for ' the stranger ' to accompany you, to supervise the development of your powers."

At this the stranger was instantly behind me, but I did not see why this spirit should not go with me, at my side, instead of constantly behind. We moved upwards, not instantaneously, but slowly as it were, and I conversed with this interesting and retiring companion of mine as we journeyed.

I was very anxious to go far away in the endeavour to see what information I could glean. We traversed a tract of space where but few spirits were seen, here and there, and these were dull bright spirits. At last we reached a new region altogether, for the feeling to me was a fresh one, and quite different from that experienced around the earth. I lingered and looked ; there were immense numbers of spirits in the distance ; they were completely devoid of brightness, hence were not so easily distinguishable from one another. They were in dense crowds—this I knew and saw.

I now bid my companion retire, as I said, " a few miles," and instantly I rushed into their midst eager for knowledge, shouting as I forced my way among them, " Halloa, Boys ! " This movement and this ejaculation I executed without thought, for my spiritual person does not think, it acts according to its powers. I was in the very centre of them, and they answered my greeting by packing around me in overwhelming numbers—walls on all sides of me, above and beneath, a dense mass of spirits piled upon the top of each other as close as they could crowd.

I looked on in amazement, and with equal astonishment they peered at me. I knew that they were evil spirits in their hell, and I felt the depressing influence of its atmosphere. I tried to examine them individually, but found that it was impossible to do so amidst such a seething mass of evil vitality, so I willed one out from the throng into my immediate presence in order that I might examine him closely. Instantly one was in front of me. I looked at him intently; he was small and dark, in the sense that there was no radius of power and brightness surrounding him. His figure was withered and famished-looking, and his outline was somewhat different from those of other evil spirits I had previously seen. This one, however, was the first spirit of this class whom I had ever really tried to examine, and I had only begun to satisfy my curiosity when the others closed in upon me in such overwhelming numbers that I was compelled to abandon the examination.

Once more I gazed around at this noiseless throng of spiritual outcasts. It was an appalling sight, literally an embodiment of evilness! Not a ray of light anywhere, and I inferred that probably I had landed at some trysting-place common to many of this type. I felt that their evil influence was seriously affecting me. My power was being rapidly consumed, and my body, especially, was beginning to feel the exhaustion. I was compelled to withdraw from their midst, slowly and by stages until quite clear of them, then I returned to my strange companion, who was waiting for me where I had left him.

“Stranger!” I said. “I have been amongst evil spirits;—such a spectacle as I never witnessed before. My curiosity is but now being aroused to investigate evil as it really is,—but these spirits are different from those in the region from which I came?”

“Yes, sir; you are correct. This is the abode of different spirits, but I cannot explain, such is not my duty.”

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Here, like a flash, Marian was in front of me, and I knew that she could explain.

"Well, Marian; you are here as usual just at the proper time. Can you explain?"

"Come, sir," she replied, "and learn for yourself."

We then moved beyond this locality until we came to clear space again.

"Now, sir! You have gathered that after you left Minerva and myself you traversed clear space until you arrived at this region—have you not?"

"Yes, Marian; I understand it all now. This is the abode of evil spirits upon another world. Can you show me that world?"

"Yes, sir, come!—there is the world!"

"Different from our world," I replied after looking at it for some time. For it was composed of material that gave it a different spiritual aspect. The feeling was an entirely new one to me, but we did not descend to its actual surface. Evil spirits again surrounded us in immense numbers.

"Surely, Marian, there are many times more evil spirits here than around our world?"

"Let us compare them, sir, then you will be able to form your own conclusions!"

Decidedly this was the best thing to do in order to enable me to form a definite opinion upon this very interesting and important subject. In the past my attention had not been directly drawn towards evil spirits; they had not aroused my curiosity, so I had never exhibited any anxiety to examine them. As a matter of fact I must have been amongst them in my previous explorations, but not having the desire to notice them, I had not seen them as I did now in the terrible significance of their numbers.

We returned forthwith to the immediate vicinity of our own world for the purpose of forming a basis for my calculations. As we approached it we moderated the

speed of our journey so that we might observe them distinctly.

We found them in great numbers, and closely packed right on the earth's surface, but as the radius increased they rapidly grew fewer. We travelled a very great distance, minutely observing their numbers, but did not stop to examine them critically, for such was not my present desire. Even when in their midst I personally was not so banefully affected as I had been on the other world.

"You now see for yourself, sir!" Marian observed. "You were correct in your surmise, for there are certainly many more upon that other world than upon this one; but let us return again, now that you have satisfied yourself of the numbers here, and compare them with those of the previous world."

We returned, and were there in the midst of them in no time. Sure enough the difference was pronounced, for here their numbers were literally amazing. If evil spirits around the earth are counted by millions or billions, then certainly these here must be calculated upon a fresh basis altogether. In the mass of which I was now in the midst, there must have been hundreds of thousands at least, and this was only at one spot far away from that world's surface. At a similar distance from the earth they were not very numerous—at least, nothing compared with this.

After I had satisfied myself of this fact we slowly returned, communing by the way.

"Well, Marian!" I began. "Here, indeed, is a big problem before us. This world we have just left must be much more thickly populated than the earth,—perhaps it is much larger, or possibly it may have been inhabited longer?"

"Well, sir, we shall probably see in time."

"Have you, Marian, been here before and examined them as we have just done?"

"No, sir; I have not been here before, so I know

nothing about this world, but as it is your work to explore and mine to assist you, so we shall learn all that is necessary."

"Then this is not the same world that we visited some time ago?"

"No, sir; you can judge that for yourself. You must know by your brain's impressions." (I afterwards found out that the world I had previously visited in my then undeveloped condition was in a different direction altogether.)

"I noticed, Marian, that the spirits we have just left were different in form from the evil spirits around the earth; at least, I got that impression, for I examined one and he was certainly quite different in shape."

"Ah! Then we shall examine them. There is reason in that statement, for they are upon a different world; and you also noted that its substance was not of the same material as the earth?"

"Well, that was my impression. The substance was different to look upon, and felt different, but of course I cannot go entirely upon that. However, I should like to satisfy myself completely upon this point."

"Well said, sir! It will be information for you."

"And why not for you, Marian?"

"Well, sir, it is this way. It is your duty to obtain information as your interest prompts you; my duty is to help you, hence it is information to me in that sense. But looking at it from my view—from my spiritual standpoint—it is not information that is of any importance, for this is but the First Sphere—God's testing-ground! I am beyond it now, as you know. My curiosity, if you like to call it such, does not have attractions in all directions like yours, it is in one direction only. You see none but Omnipotence can know all; we who are imperfect can only expect to acquire a very minute amount of knowledge as compared with the whole."

"Yes, Marian, I perceive. Man is really so ignorant that in seeking information he makes his condition more

pronounced. But it is his very instinct to wish to know everything he possibly can."

"Quite correct, sir! Man is very ignorant indeed—so ignorant that he actually thinks he knows a great deal."

"Very true! But about those spirits who are in hell, Marian: neither is it difficult to understand that it is a veritable hell to them in their degraded condition—hell in themselves! Halloa! what is this, Marian?"

"That is the power which keeps them in this region—an angel!"

I looked spell-bound. We were close beside a great, powerful angel. It was an awe-inspiring but magnificent spectacle! There he stood—motionless, solitary, enveloped in power;—power and brightness almost impossible to imagine, and so intense that it was even reflected in itself. I gazed in wonder and admiration—a mere pigmy alongside! The sight was grand! sublime! superb! I lingered absorbed with interest; unfathomable power was there concentrated in one object; sufficient to destroy whole earthly nations, yet it was necessary here. Inquisitive though I was, still it never occurred to me to approach or question this angel;—I was humbled before such majestic power.

"Marian," I exclaimed, "what a glorious spectacle! I certainly have noticed them before, but never near enough to ascertain that they were of so impressive a nature."

"Yes, sir. There is power indeed to keep these evil spirits in order and prevent them from disobeying God's laws. You know that they are not God's spirits, hence He in His power overrules them—and this angel is their one and only law."

"Indeed! Do I understand that there are no recognised laws by which to govern them, and that this angel is solely to keep them under subjection and restrain them from giving free bent to their evil properties? Surely, then, this may be literally and intelligibly termed 'hell

fire,' for such is indeed the fire of subjection! Now I can realise without doubt that they are in hell, that they themselves constitute hell. The misery of such a position must be intense,—but are they not allowed to roam beyond this guarding angel?"

"Yes, sir, certainly; anywhere in this region!—but to what purpose? Their sole desire is to be continually amongst evil, associating with their like; they have their instincts, of course!"

"These angels, I then understand, prevent any interfering or disorderly conduct, any fighting—in fact, enforce obedience upon evil spirits. Hell, in my opinion, could not be pictured worse than it is—subjected misery! What will it be like when all its inhabitants are turned loose amongst themselves? when the end of the trial of souls has arrived? when they are judged and cast off?"

Again we moved, and were instantly in the region of the earth, and standing before Minerva.

"Well, my pupil!" Minerva began. "You have gleaned a little knowledge, I see; your powers are improving!"

"Yes, Minerva. I have learned much, but just sufficient to whet my appetite to know more. If possible, I should certainly like to investigate these evil spirits further in their respective abodes. But, Minerva, here is a point which opens my eyes to the unlimited power of God! If these evil spirits whom I have just left are from one world alone, and there are perhaps hundreds, if not thousands, of such worlds, each governed separately, and every soul known to the Great King, there must be countless billions of souls? To think, also, that they are still increasing faster than ever, and that I have only seen minute portions of two worlds—the problem is unsolvable!"

"Ah, sir! You are slowly beginning to realise the mighty workings of God."

"True, Minerva. The more I see the greater does

God's power appear ; it is totally beyond conception. Imagine ! some of the inhabitants of our world, in their profound ignorance, consider God to be a man of substance, in bodily form like unto themselves, but capable of doing stupendous things,—what a contrast to the reality ! Then, Minerva, what I also saw was the surface of another world just like our earth ? ”

“ Undoubtedly, sir. Did you not see for yourself ? ”

“ But please explain to me the principal features.”

“ Well, sir ! Those evil spirits you saw are the cast-offs from that world in the test of souls. They are unfit to advance as being worthless, so are guarded by God's angels to keep them in order, from doing mischief, until the time arrives to give them their due.”

“ Then they were evil spirits, alone, in their abode, for I did not see even one who had any brightness at all. But, Minerva, was that an older world than the earth, or why were the evil spirits so terribly dense everywhere I looked ? ”

“ You can see for yourself, for I know nothing about that region, as my work is confined to this one alone.”

“ Thanks, Minerva. To-morrow night, if possible, I shall further examine them, so now I think it advisable for me to return to my body ; it is getting extremely exhausted.”

I bid her adieu, and with Marian slowly descended to my body, where I carefully reviewed all that I had seen and experienced that night. It is always very interesting to me to know what ideas my brain distils from my various spiritual adventures, for are they not really my own, and the limit to which I can impart information ?

Next night I did my utmost thoroughly to examine evil spirits, and for this purpose again visited that same strange world with Marian and my other help, for Minerva never accompanies me, her mission being, as she stated, not to explore but to teach. Her knowledge was beyond the necessity to see. Marian was my guide and trusty friend, so was doing her duty in accompanying me, and

the stranger constituted the rear-guard, always having an attentive eye to my development. Both these spirits were essential in their way, no doubt, but the exact reasons are perhaps too deep for me to understand.

Once again I was in the midst of evil spirits, around the surface of this strange world. Again I obtruded myself prominently, and was instantly enveloped so thickly that I could but remain rooted to the spot, as it were, in dumbfounded amazement. Yes, they were just as numerous as before—a massive wall on all sides. There was no chance for me to examine them, crowded together as they then were, so I retired to my companions. They, likewise, were surrounded by numbers of them, but were, comparatively speaking, alone to what I had just been. Prompted no doubt by curiosity at my abnormal appearance they followed me, and thus closed us in by their tens of thousands. The situation was intolerable, so we retreated to what was probably their usual outside limit. Here, also, they were thick, but not in dense masses. I looked at them carefully as a body, and at one in particular who did not seem at all unwilling to be examined. He was a very miserable-looking object, and by way of comparison I requested Marian to stand by his side, for he made no attempt to move—probably he could not. What a contrast! The one was a beautiful sight, fully three times the size of the other, for the power of light radiated in an oval shape, in the centre of which I could see the smiling countenance of Marian; the other, by her side, was a withered-up, abject little form, pinched in all respects, and more closely resembling a mummy than anything else. There certainly was an outline to the figure, but so dark that it was difficult to distinguish it. The figure itself seemed to have a tapering head, a long neck, a short body, and long and attenuated arms and legs, yet I would not be absolutely confident in this assertion, for as I have just stated the figure was enveloped in darkness. The entire form was evil darkness; it was submerged in its own

black evilness—its power of evilness (darkness is the spiritual evidence of the “power of evil”): “For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light.” Marian, on the other hand, was wrapped up, as it were, in her power of faith and goodness. Of the two, Marian’s figure was more hidden in the surrounding brightness than was the evil spirit enshrouded in the darkness of evil power. A more amazing contrast one can never expect to behold!

I looked earnestly at them for long, then the thought struck me to compare myself with this evil spirit, so I advanced to the side of this grinning devil. I was considerably the taller of the two; he was about two-thirds my height, but his narrow, contracted, shrivelled-up condition made the difference appear more pronounced.

My curiosity being now satisfied, we returned to the neighbourhood of the earth’s surface in order to examine an evil spirit there. We stopped in front of several, one of whom I selected for examination, but my power was by this time exhausted, both with the effort employed and by the sinister influence natural to hell and evil. Still, as I was not anxious to return forthwith to my body, we determined to roam about in the vicinity of the earth, and see if we could discover anything which would be of a novel and interesting nature to me. Evil spirits we met in crowds everywhere, as well as many of the frivolous type. These latter I could detect by sight, but as yet I have not been prompted to examine them. There were also a few bright spirits here and there, as well as several guarding angels standing out prominently like so many beacon-lights in their solemn grandeur and majesty.

The immediate surface of the earth I have not yet attempted to explore; many interesting sights are there awaiting me I feel certain, but for the present I am alone desirous of obtaining a general knowledge of the outlying region. However, my power now became so spent that I was compelled to return to my body, there to think over what I had seen and learned.

The next occasion upon which I ventured into the

region of wonders as usual I first met my friends. A few remarks passed, and then I wended my way to the locality which had interested me so much on my last visit.

Alone in my wanderings I bent my gaze upon evil spirits in particular, and they were present in countless throngs all over. Without exception they all had the same wretched, haggard, pinched, depraved look that I had previously noticed in them, and were all more or less alike.

Once I stopped, curious to know whether or not they would congregate about me, when almost instantly I was closed in on all sides by uncountable swarms of them. There they were as usual, whichever way I looked—above, beneath, and on all sides—forming a complete circle around my solitary self, but none attempted to break in upon me. Although not so dense as I had seen them in a similar locality upon that other world, still they were equally as curious. On I went again, keeping about the same distance from the earth, for I had no inclination whatever to descend to its surface, where I knew they were to be found in seething hordes. Wherever I willed myself, it was just the same—evil spirits everywhere. What a dismal sight! What a melancholy thought! and only very occasionally did I meet a bright spirit to relieve the monotony of sameness, or a few frivolous ones bent on amusement.

Upon one occasion a crowd of these latter stopped right in front of me, then glided past so near me that I felt them. I stood and looked at them, and they paused in their levity to gaze at me. I tried to use my power to find out what they wanted, but to no purpose except that they were amusing themselves, so I exercised my full will-power to force them away, then looked for the result, and behold, they had all vanished.

Guarding angels were posted at regular intervals, suggesting to my mind the reality of the awful and wicked condition of evil spirits, infinitely worse than ever man on earth can imagine.

Whenever I looked for evil spirits I was never disappointed ; they were always there, at all levels. They could not possibly have followed me for I moved suddenly, and invariably went a considerable distance each time. No, I was now satisfied that this region of near vicinity to the earth was literally a congested mass of spirits, of which evil constituted by far the largest proportion.

I did not visit that other world, being much too interested in exploring the conditions which maintained upon our own sphere.

I must have journeyed an immense distance, for I was constantly moving, so I concluded that the presence of evil spirits was general. Then I ascended into the region beyond the home-bounds of evil spirits, and found the atmosphere much brighter and more genial, nor was it reeking with the contaminating, baneful influence of evil.

Here I turned round and saw the stranger not far behind. He had silently and faithfully followed me all this immense distance, but how he had managed to do it unknown to myself I cannot explain. All that I could extract from him was that he had followed me in case I required help. How thoughtful Minerva had been, and how thoroughly she was working her mission ! Nothing escaped her vigilant eye and intelligent mind ! Here was this spirit always behind me, ever guarding against a breakdown in my complex powers. I seldom felt him, and never realised his presence unless I looked behind me, but he was always there, I suppose connected with me by some unseen magnetic power natural to this mysterious world.

After I had wandered about, in this particular investigation amongst evil spirits, as far as my powers satisfactorily permitted me, I willed myself to the place where Minerva was waiting my return. This was very easily effected, for it was simply necessary for me to think of her, and let myself go to her, and I was there.

This very expeditious way of traversing space seems

quite natural to me when my spiritual self ; indeed, it is natural even to the human mind when it has been educated to realise the nature of my spiritual body. It never strikes me when I am wandering about in the spiritworld, far away from my body, or from Minerva, to consider how I am to get back, for I instinctively know that I can return whenever the desire manifests itself.

My arrival found the four of us together again, just the same as before I started out, and I had probably been over a great portion of the earth's surface.

Minerva, of course, knew everything ; indeed, I had no need to explain anything either to her or Marian. We simply dwelt upon what I had seen and done, without any explaining or questioning. We dilated upon various subjects just as ideas came into my mind, and Minerva would make a few explanatory statements. I myself could not in the least fathom what Minerva's thoughts were, but she knew mine. It was a one-sided business altogether. I did not ask questions as one does upon earth : a point suddenly flashes into my mind in a small compass, as it were, then this point is dwelt upon and explained by Minerva, if necessary. We then remain silent again until other points rush prominently into my mind, each in its turn to be settled.

This very advanced method of intercommunication is soon at an end, for the subjects raised are instantly so satisfactorily dealt with that no further reference to them is necessary. This electric method of explaining things, however, has its drawbacks as far as I am concerned, for one must never forget for a single moment that behind and beneath my spiritual form is a dull, material brain—ah, that poor brain, how melancholy the thought !—which frequently cannot keep pace with the velocity of such communications, nor yet do they always contain sufficient body in them to be received and appropriated by my brain. I know the answers when the points crop up again in my mind, but cannot

recall the circumstances or connections in regard to them when my material self. They are essentially inherent to the spiritual condition—natural to the last letter.

The above is the method in which we invariably converse, except when very important points have to be imprinted upon my brain, then the method adopted is of a distinctly different nature.

The firmness and emphasis used by the one explaining are sufficient to impress my brain as well as my spiritual self ; and if the former is not satisfied, or has difficulty in receiving the information, then it is explained from another standpoint, hence I have little else to do but concentrate my attention so that my brain may be duly satisfied.

Again, communicating thus is all right in its way, but I must first find subjects which I wish to have explained before interviews of this nature are of any value. The difficulty in this respect is always upon my side, for it frequently requires considerable exercise of thought to recollect items of importance on the spur of the moment ; but to have topics explained from Minerva's standpoint always impresses me very forcibly. Indeed, every subject of interest we dwell upon, even suppose no explanation at all is required, is always well implanted in my brain by Minerva. Questions to be considered are brought to the surface of my mind in currents ; there I hold them, as it were, uppermost until I instinctively know whether any information upon them is forthcoming or not—if not, then they vanish where they came from. Information imparted to me under spiritual regulations almost seems to assume a definite form—at least, that is the best way I can explain the current by which it is communicated.

I am gradually getting more and more acclimatised to the ways of spirits, and the more I become absorbed into the condition the more am I capable of acquiring fresh information ; and points which I at first noticed, but did not understand, are now by degrees being revealed to me.

Upon this occasion I acquired much knowledge spiritually, yet very little that was of interest to my brain, as it was, perhaps, beyond its grasp, or possibly it may not be advisable to encumber my brain with unnecessary information. I have the knowledge within myself that they were explanations concerning the spiritual existence solely, but I cannot recall them to my memory no matter how much I try.

The spiritual powers of knowledge have their limits just in the same way that the human brain is restricted, for a spirit is not in any sense of the word omnipotent; still, these powers are capable of receiving much information that the less endowed brain would reject. The two are very different in their properties; each being adapted to its own requirements; and what one knows, as well as requires for its well-being, the other cannot realise. Spirits wonder at the strange doings of men, at their peculiar habits, quite ignoring the fact that they themselves once indulged in these very habits; while men marvel at and doubt the mysterious powers allowed and the laws governing their fellow souls in a more advanced condition.

How, then, can I be expected to convey to the human brain information which is beyond its capacity to grasp, or even to be impressed by? It is not so satisfactory to me as I should like, for I have but to force my presence into my spiritual body again in order to reassure myself of the astounding information I possess, but when I return a large proportion of that knowledge is gone, or is clouded in obscurity.

CHAPTER V

UPWARDS

FOR several nights I was unable to personate my spiritual character, the reason as usual being exhausted power, which nothing but rest can recuperate.

On the visit which I am about to record I was permitted to pursue my investigations in a new channel altogether, and one which I feel sure will be of especial interest to my fellow men.

During my very peculiar journeys I, of course, noticed in a casual way everything of minor importance that happened, and not only this but I encountered many novelties requiring explanation, which, although trivial in themselves, excited my curiosity for the moment.

One circumstance in particular I noticed as being a feature of considerable perplexity which would greatly gratify me to have explained, and which upon this occasion was elucidated in a very practical and common-sense way by the experiments we made. Indeed, I consider now that my mind is upon the subject, that all the spiritual sights I have beheld and the experiences met with in my past explorations have been made evident to me in a very graphic and intelligible way, for as a matter of fact my common-sense brain could not accept any information that was not capable of being so construed. They were mysteries only until explained; then they were denuded of the mysterious and brought down to the level from which every average intellect could appreciate them as coming within the laws of reason.

The question which every now and again had puzzled me was: Which is the true upward direction?—upwards

towards heaven, for heaven is the true zenith. At first glance, without consideration, one would naturally reply—straight above one's head from the position one then occupies. But after a moment's thought such an idea becomes untenable for many reasons.

Again, one would almost instinctively point to the sun as being the zenith, but of this I had my doubts, not so much from my human and material knowledge as from the fact that when I personate my double, which I always do at night only, when the sun is far below the horizon, I do not to my recollection, when going to our *rendezvous*, pass through any section of the earth's substance, but seem to go straight in an upward direction, away from the place my body occupies. Whether I go in the true upward direction or not remains to be explained, but if the sun be the true upward direction, and if I am in the habit of first travelling in the upward direction, then my form must necessarily pass through a portion of the earth's substance; besides, the earth is ever rushing onwards in its elliptic round the sun.

Such being the case, it was evident to me that some further explanation was necessary to settle this point, which at present is occasioning me considerable thought.

At various times, since my first visit to the spiritworld, this question had interested me, but the more I tried to satisfy myself upon it the more untenable my various theories appeared, so I left it unsolved.

Upon this occasion, when we were at our meeting-place, before starting out upon my investigations, Minerva informed me that she had determined upon a new experience for me, one essentially necessary for the advancement of my supernatural organisation of half-spirit, half-man. I did not ask what this experience was to be, for I knew that it would come when the proper time arrived, so I waited for instructions, my chief desire at this time being thoroughly to investigate and compare the conditions of evil spirits on different worlds.

Minerva, no doubt, had previously made all arrange-

ments requisite for this new experience which it was to be my privilege to undergo ; but first of all it was necessary to arouse my curiosity to such a degree as to induce me to concentrate all my interest in the investigation ; nevertheless, I had no knowledge of this at the moment when I waited for permission to prosecute my study of evil spirits.

Minerva directed me to go wherever I pleased around this earth, and instructed Marian to accompany me, and the stranger to follow.

For some little time we pursued this occupation, and saw many millions of evil spirits, but I had no reliable means of estimating their exact numbers. We found them chiefly congregated in dense masses in the space immediately clear of the earth's line of substance. Sometimes, again, they were in small groups, or alone, sometimes below us, sometimes above, but seldom were they on a parallel line with ourselves. We did not go close to or attempt to examine any of these groups, for Marian was ever eagerly pressing onwards until we reached a certain locality on the earth's surface.

We were conversing in this locality when I suddenly became curious to know why spirits always assumed the same position on the earth's surface, no matter where they were, with their heads away from the earth. I had already several times noticed this, and knew that there must be a reason for it, but, somehow, I never previously had the desire to inquire.

It was a greater problem to solve than appears at first sight. The earth, of course, I knew was round, hence there must be a reason why spirits always assume this position ; but, again, when far away in space, they always all adopt the same position, their heads ever in the same direction, no matter where I was,—there must also be a law for this.

In order to satisfy myself I asked Marian if I were correct in my surmise that spirits were actually in the above-stated position on the other side of the earth.

By way of answer she bade me forthwith come and see for myself. Of course I willingly consented, and we immediately began to descend while we were conversing, with our forms in the natural earthly attitude—our heads away from its surface. We slackened our pace, and then went very slowly as we approached the extreme opposite side of the earth. Marian then told me to watch and see what took place, and as soon as we were about to emerge into the open we slowly and mechanically turned upside down into the natural position of the human inhabitants at that place.

This explanation so far satisfied my curiosity, for I noticed spirits in precisely the same position as ourselves. But now I wanted an explanation of this remarkable though very natural law, for spirits are quite differently ordered and governed from man. The laws which control material existence are no laws to immaterial existence, therefore there must be a spiritual law which compels spirits to adopt this position, and I wished to know what that law was.

I did not intend to conceal my curiosity, however ignorant it made me appear, for I quite realised that I was permitted into that world purposely to satisfy that curiosity, and through me the curiosity and doubts of others, so I asked Marian for an explanation.

“Tell me, Marian ; why is this natural to spirits, why is it law ? ”

“That is quite simple, sir. This region is governed by attractions, hence laws. In this particular region of the First Sphere the earth is the centre of evil attractions ; frivolous spirits also have their attractions here, so have working spirits. The earth is, then, the centre of spiritual attractions in its immediate radius, consequently spirits assume the natural posture towards the centre of attraction. It is one of the laws of attraction.”

“Quite clear, Marian. But, from what I have elsewhere noticed, where does this law of attraction end and the attraction of space begin ? ”

“The best way to find out, sir, is to see for yourself,—come !”

Forthwith we both went straight down in the same line in which we had passed through the earth's interior. Then, after arriving in clear spiritual atmosphere where nothing was visible but space, we naturally changed our posture to a fresh one. We did not turn completely as before, but how much I do not know, for we performed the operation slowly, and there was nothing by which I could gauge how much we had turned.

“This, then, Marian, is the position of spirits generally, when free from earthly attraction ?”

“Yes, sir. This is the natural attitude of spirits.”

“Their heads towards heaven ?”

“Yes, sir. Although heaven is very far away indeed, the posture in this region is as you state, but further I cannot at present explain.”

“Another question, Marian. Do evil spirits assume this posture when heaven is the attraction ?”

“Yes, sir ; it is law in this sphere. But they have first to pass into space, beyond their attractions, which they seldom do.”

“Now, Marian, one question more upon a different subject. Which is the true upward direction ? I know that we are in that position now, but how does the earth lie in relation to the sun ? And what position does the sun occupy in relation to the true upward direction ?”

“That, sir, is a question which we shall settle later on ; but now let us return to the earth's surface, for there is nothing interesting to us here.”

We were then instantly upon the earth again, and in the natural attitude according to the law of the earth's attraction, but on this occasion the revolving operation was performed so rapidly that I did not appear to have turned at all, for at that moment my thoughts were otherwise occupied ; but most certainly we did turn, for we were in the normal position similar to all other spirits upon the earth's surface.

The place on earth at which we arrived was at some spot clear of all spirits. I could see that the line of surface was a huge flat plain, bared of all spiritual sights, and from this I inferred that we must be somewhere upon an ocean.

This remarkably clear district, free from all spiritual influences, very much resembling space, yet instinctively I could feel that it was not space, was to me a new sensation, for I had not previously visited any place upon the earth's surface so entirely free from the presence and influence of spirits.

"Marian," I remarked, "I believe that we are upon some ocean : try and find out for certain, if you please, for I am curious to know."

"Perhaps it is some ocean, as you call it, sir, but that is of no moment. Such inquiries are very earthly and unimportant. You will soon take no interest in such inconsequential subjects when you know more of spiritual workings and laws. Have you satisfied yourself upon the subject we were discussing concerning the spiritual laws of attraction in the regions where worlds are the centres of attraction ? "

"Yes, completely. All worlds, then, have the same laws ? "

"Yes, of course, sir ! All worlds are centres of attraction for those spirits in their immediate vicinity. But let us now return to Minerva, and she will explain every point you wish."

So we went. Not that I required further convincing upon the subject just explained, and what I had experienced for myself, as I had full confidence in Marian, but it seems to be an inherent desire on my part always to wish for a final explanation from Minerva. It is my habitual custom to hear what my chief instructor has to say upon any subject before my brain is satisfied. No doubt such wish is in obedience to some spiritual law, for she is the angel to whom this mission is entrusted and all responsibility naturally rests upon her. Further,

Minerva never allows any point to be dismissed from my mind, as fully elucidated, until she herself has heard and seen what my ideas are upon it,—whether correct as far as my limited powers will allow, or yet incompletely grasped.

When we arrived in her presence, as a matter of course, I communicated to her all the information recently obtained. This was done in a moment, in spiritual language, totally beyond further explanation.

She then began in her own way to explain everything that I had already learned, no doubt to impress upon my mind still more forcibly the exactness of it all.

“Your views and ideas, my friend, are quite correct, and the experiments you made greatly assisted you in arriving at these conclusions. It is a recognised law that worlds are centres of attraction to all spirits working or idling in any particular region around any particular world. They are the focal points of spiritual doings outside the other spheres, hence the centres of spiritual attractions. Again, space, clear space, is a distinct study of its own; suffice it, then, when I state that in space spiritual natural laws are recognised, for it is but in the immediate radius of worlds that this other law operates. This, sir, is one of the great mysteries of Eternal Completeness which you see is being revealed to you.

“Now concerning the question of ‘Upwards’ from a spiritual standpoint, we shall prove it to you this night. You shall be furnished with a basis upon which to form correct ideas. We shall take the earth and the sun which provides it with light as the base, for they are the bodies from which you can best judge. We shall traverse the distance between these two bodies with our own positions under the laws of space, namely, our heads directly upwards. We shall start from that portion of the earth which is uppermost in the direction of upwards towards heaven, thence in a straight line to that power you call ‘the Sun.’ I am provided with the means to guide us to that same sun, for of course I do not see it, hence cannot tell where it is. But, sir, you had better

return to your body to refresh it previous to starting out upon your journey, as it will require the exercise of great power to investigate what I intend that you shall discover this night: return here when you are ready, and then we shall start."

Forthwith I complied with this wise recommendation to revivify my brain so as to command better success. After resting a few moments I returned to the place where I had left them. They were waiting for me—Minerva, Marian, and the stranger.

"Sir," began Minerva, "this experiment is solely to furnish you with reliable data from which the direction of 'Upwards' may be proved, hence our bearings must be such as to enable you to form a correct basis, and your own powers are quite sufficient for the rest. Now we will first go to that portion of the earth which is truly uppermost in a heavenly direction. The sun at the present time does not lie upwards from the earth, but more upon a level with it. We must utilise our own forms as the means by which to work this experiment. They are now directly upwards and downwards—and *shall remain thus until we return*. Now, sir, that you know the grounds upon which you shall reveal to man the direction of true upwards, let us go at once."

So we were immediately upon that portion of the earth then uppermost. I have not the least idea where that spot was, but I know that it was far away from my body.

Here we remained for a short time only. Almost immediately after our arrival I noticed that a fresh powerful spirit was present, who I instinctively knew was endowed with power to conduct us straight to our destination—the Sun! We then formed into position quite naturally, the guide leading; the stranger to his left and a short distance behind; then we three came, Minerva upon my right and Marian upon my left. We started! Slowly at first for some little distance—probably a few thousand miles—then stopped.

"Now, sir," Minerva here remarked in imperturbable

accents, "for the direction we are travelling ; let us first examine. You see the earth behind us ? "

" Yes."

Here she bade the guide advance a short distance, then, pointing towards him with her finger, said :

" There, sir ; you have the line of direction from the earth to the sun ! Your own form is the perpendicular line, your head pointing straight to heaven !—now take your bearings yourself."

I looked at the earth, then at the guide, then at my position. I carefully gauged the horizontal line from my own perpendicular form. I knew perfectly well the importance of being accurate in my measurement, and I firmly impressed the perceptive powers of my brain with the angle. Then I instinctively marked the spot where I stood and retired to my right side to estimate the angle accurately. I went to where Minerva was poised in space, then turned round. Yes ! there was the spot where I had stood marked by a brightness ; there also was the direction in which we were pursuing our course to the sun marked out by a bright line, so also was the horizontal line I had gauged conspicuous by another bright line. This electric diagram, spontaneously drawn, did not seem strange to me then, but quite natural—in fact, so natural that it seems odd that I should wonder at it when not my spiritual self.

I looked long and thoughtfully at this angle of direction to the sun from the horizontal line, and as far as I could judge, with nothing to guide me but my sight and a clear spiritual perception, it was a little more than half-way between the horizontal line and the angle of 45° . We were then going towards the sun at about the angle of 25° . I did my very best to be accurate, but of course could not be exactly so without more reliable means of calculating the angle over and above the bare lines. After I had looked at this diagram for some time, and considered it to the best of my ability, I felt satisfied at the decision I had arrived at. Instantly Minerva

knew this, and immediately we had taken up our positions again—and vanished.

Once more we slackened our terrific speed after we had gone some distance, but how far of course I cannot say—possibly some astronomer may eventually be able to determine. We did not stop, but I saw directly beneath us a mass of substance rapidly being left behind. It was small, but many times bigger than the sun as seen from the earth. It was large enough to be only partially obscured by my form as we passed it. For all I knew it might have been a huge mass far away, or perhaps a smaller body closer to. It was very soon totally out of sight behind; then we quickened up and in a moment were in front of the sun's great massive body. We stopped and gazed! Before us was a perpendicular wall of blackness towering up until it was lost in distance, and the same in the downward direction. To my great surprise, it was not bright, but to our conditions appeared perfectly black—if colour can be described by spiritual forms. The outline was not clearly defined, but it was nothing more than a black mass to me.

We remained silent, intently observing it, and I was struck by the extreme opposite to light in which it now appeared to me.

Minerva began by observing: "Now, sir, we shall explore its interior,—let us go!"

We then advanced, comparatively speaking, slowly, and entered it full in the face, our upward forms entering its perpendicular wall. Our progress into its body was slow, and its blackness very soon became so intense that I actually could not see Minerva's figure. Here we were, then, in the sun's interior and absolutely in blackness, yet we had penetrated but a very short distance!

This was the first occasion upon which Minerva and myself had been alone together on any of my explorations, therefore there must evidently have been some reason for this unexpected honour shown me.

She informed me that this sun was a power, not of

substance such as the earth is composed, but of elements more resembling our own conditions—and this was true, for we could not penetrate far into its interior.

I felt a peculiar dazed sensation slowly overpowering me as we with difficulty pressed forward further into the body of the sun. I could not see Minerva anywhere, but could feel her presence close at my right side. Soon we came to a full stop, and she said :

“ This, sir, is the sun you know of ; it is indeed a great power ! ”

“ What is all this blackness, Minerva ? ”

“ It is a form of power, sir, peculiar to itself, to meet its requirements.”

“ Minerva ! I feel that it is not of substance such as our earth is composed. It imparts a feeling to me totally different from anything I have yet explored.”

“ Correct, sir. This is no substance as you know substance, but let us penetrate further into its interior.”

“ Then there is substance behind this blackness, Minerva ? ”

“ I know nothing beyond the fact that it is a power equal to its requirements, but you can safely rest assured that its properties are those best suited to its purposes. Its composition is perhaps beyond my power of comprehension.”

“ I wonder if it is inhabited, Minerva ? Not that I believe it is, but I meet so many strange and unexpected things in this world that for all I know it may be inhabited by existences adapted to the sun’s conditions.”

“ There is not the least likelihood of its being inhabited by souls undergoing their test ; it is not here for that purpose.”

“ Just so. But to govern the worlds that are controlled by its power ? ”

“ Yes, sir. Also for reasons upon which we cannot form accurate ideas.”

“ Do you think we can penetrate still further into its interior ? ” I remarked.

We advanced but little despite our most determined efforts, for its elements were now so condensed as to forbid any further penetration, but they were of the same nature as the outside, only more concentrated. At last, being compelled to give up the attempt, I exclaimed :

“Minerva ! let us return ; this is unbearable. I cannot even feel you now.”

“It is useless to remain here any longer, sir, now that you have learned all you can about it.”

We slowly retired, and, in a short time, emerged from the perpendicular wall of its surface into open space again. The relief was intense, and space bright and refreshing compared with the feeling of oppression imparted by the sun's interior.

I looked all around on the chance of seeing any strange spirits hovering about, but none were visible anywhere.

In the distance I saw our companions in a group patiently awaiting our return, and the sight was a most pleasing one. We joined them without delay, and, after taking up our respective positions, we started as if by mutual consent, and in a flash were once again at our trysting-place in the home region of the earth. Here Minerva was before me cool and imperturbable as usual, as if our late interesting and exhausting journey were nothing to her, waiting to explain to me anything that I might require information upon before retiring to my body.

I had seen for myself, and at that moment had no questions to ask, so I begged to be allowed to return again to my exhausted frame.

Marian accompanied me as usual, and when I had comfortably installed my remarkable powers once more into their natural home, of course I had something to think about.

It is not necessary for me to recapitulate in detail what my actual thoughts were after I had read them in my

brain. They were probably the same that would pass through the mind of any person so situated as myself, and similar to those which will impress any thoughtful and intelligent reader of these pages.

I could not take exception to anything that was done, or cavil at the way in which it was executed. The entire undertaking could not have been ordered and arranged better by the most accomplished caterer to the most common-sense appetite. What was done was done by a master hand and in a masterly style. The conception of the whole experiment was grand, and exhibited no common measure of care, forethought, and power.

The impressions of the nature of the sun, obtained from a visit to it, were feasible in the extreme, although, in some respects, the very opposite from what one would naturally have expected to meet.

Two points I feel compelled to notice briefly in the consideration of the sun, which forcibly convinced me in a way in which they can no other man, that it is in truth a power essentially different in its elements of composition from any substance that I have yet met with.

In the first place, its intense blackness was evidence of a condition totally different from any world of substance I have ever visited. To my spiritual form substance, as it exists in this earth, and in those other worlds upon which I have explored, has a light appearance as a whole, although not so light as space, and it does not ever prevent me from seeing my companion when in the midst of it; but in the sun I was totally unable to see Minerva through the intense blackness of its external and internal composition. Indeed, it was the first time in my experience that I had ever encountered any condition possessing or imparting to me an impression of such blackness.

In the second place, the obstruction it presented to our advance was proof positive in itself that we were trying to penetrate a body which, in its composition, was very near akin to our own spiritual bodies, hence became

a barrier to us. It will, I presume, have been gathered from my statements that never previously had I ever encountered difficulty in passing through matter of any kind, or on whatever world, but here was a composition met with of a nature essentially peculiar to itself; moreover, the influence of the sun's elements at last became so oppressive that I could not even feel Minerva when she was close to me, besides the overpowering effect it had upon myself.

The above undoubted facts, over and above the assertion of the powerful and learned angel, Minerva, forcibly convince me that the sun is more or less electric in its nature, or the least I can say is that it is totally different in its elements of composition from any other world of substance or matter I have visited.

The results of this very interesting experiment may be more far-reaching than I am aware of, but, on the other hand, they may not come up to my anticipations; still, I feel sure, from the very particular and finished way in which Minerva supervised and carried it out, that she had more knowledge of its importance than she gave expression to.

I think when I have stated that the above experiment took place when I lived in the south-eastern corner of the State of Idaho, U.S.A., at 10.30 P.M. on the 7th day of March, 1902 (mountain time), I have furnished sufficient and reliable data for any astronomer—if he so wishes—to solve the problem of “Upwards,” so that man at least may have the satisfaction of knowing the direction to heaven.

After thinking over and writing down the above experience which I had been permitted to undergo, I came to the conclusion that it would be advisable to ask Minerva to allow me to repeat it so as further to satisfy myself that my impressions were correct. Upon my next visit on the following evening, therefore, I submitted my wish to Minerva, who did not seem in the least surprised, but, rather, heartily endorsed my proposition,

and stated that she was prepared for it and ready to repeat it for my further satisfaction.

This is not a world where long and elaborate preparations are necessary, for nothing can be done without the consent of Heaven, and this once obtained, then electric power necessary for the occasion is immediately forthcoming ;—so we were again upon that spot on the earth truly uppermost. Again our powerful guide was there patiently waiting for us ; but before starting I took occasion to glance at surrounding objects, and I could see evil spirits congregated in groups, as well as others, and not generally upon the earth's surface. I wandered around a little, if possible to ascertain whether our starting-point was that portion of the world which was land or water, but could not positively satisfy myself.

When ready we arranged ourselves as upon the former occasion, and off we started. Again we stopped to allow me to examine the angle, but this time I was not so careful, for I thought that probably it might have changed somewhat ; if so, then my mind would not have been satisfied with the one already taken. This done, we resumed our journey to the sun, again moderating our speed, and eventually stopping for me to observe the substance I had seen the previous night. Now I noticed that it had altered its position, nor yet did it seem of the same size as yesterday. It lay beneath me and to my right, at an angle of about 45° from the horizontal. Now I could see the entire circular mass without moving, and it looked considerably larger, and apparently closer to ourselves, but this was due either to the earth having moved or this body had moved, or what is most likely, both had moved a perceptible distance. Beyond these bare facts I know nothing. We then made a sudden movement and instantly found ourselves in front of the perpendicular face of the sun, stretching upwards and downwards as far as I could see, no curve of its convexity being visible at such close quarters.

Minerva now bade me penetrate its interior as before,

but she stated that she had no reason for accompanying me this time.

The idea of going alone into such an oppressive situation did not fascinate me, not that I felt any fear, for such is unknown in this world, but I was anxious to have a companion to help me to penetrate the dense darkness, and the better to examine its properties, for if I went alone no doubt I should have returned almost immediately. I asked Marian, therefore, to accompany me ; she readily assented, and we forthwith set out.

Upon this occasion the sensation was exactly the same as upon the previous one. All sense of vision was overwhelmed by the power of this mass. The same feeling stole over me of being somewhere in something similar in its properties to ourselves, for it obstructed us even to the extent of preventing us from penetrating into its interior as far as I had done with Minerva ; in fact, we only succeeded in forcing our way forward a very short distance. In this darkness, and under such terrible pressure, there was nothing to attract us—the conditions were beyond all attraction, so we soon tired of being in such a strained situation, and hastily beat a retreat.

I had learned nothing more, for Marian was probably just as ignorant as myself upon the subject of the sun, hence could give me no information about it.

Our companions were far away in the distance, as I observed them, when we emerged from the interior darkness of this mysterious power—the Sun !

With Marian by my side I came to a full stop when clear of the mass, then looked upwards and downwards—space, absolutely pure space ! and I thought I had never been in such a delightful region. There were no influences of any kind to affect me, and nothing to see save the blackness of the sun behind ; nevertheless, I was in unadulterated space, and that was enough !

We rejoined our companions, and Minerva asked me if I had now satisfied myself.

“ Yes,” I replied, “ I am satisfied as far as my feelings

go, but I could yet wish to know more of the mysteries of the sun."

"Very true! No doubt you would like to know more, but when the sun is described it will be a study of itself. There it is in its power, of which I know but little. Let it remain, then, a power capable of doing that for which it was constructed. In every sense of the word it is a power! Now let us get a glimpse of it from a distance."

We then retired to a spot far enough away to enable us to see its spherical shape. I could faintly detect its outline in a huge circle, as high as I could see and also as low. This outline was not distinct, but was as if its exterior portion became gradually less and less dense until space absorbed its faintness.

After I had satisfied myself upon this fact the signal was given, and we returned instantaneously to the neighbourhood of the earth. Here the old feeling evinced itself of being in space, not absolutely pure, however, like that which is around the sun, but space in which I could faintly detect the elements of spiritual habitation. This was our customary meeting-place previous to my return to my body.

How long we were in accomplishing this unique journey, with its interesting attractions, I have not the least knowledge. Every spiritual action is, as a matter of fact, performed instantaneously unless otherwise desired, and all distances, long or short, are covered with the rapidity of thought, so as truly to prove that eternity knows no time.

We waited in silence for some moments, then Minerva approached me and said:

"Sir! I trust that you are satisfied with what has just been accomplished? You were certainly justified in wishing to be accurately impressed, and now I hope that the point is clearly explained to you?"

"Yes, no doubt, Minerva; as far as your powers permit it to be elucidated from a material standpoint, but in a spiritual sense I am completely satisfied."

“Indeed, sir. You must remember that there are very many obstacles in the way to prevent me from clearly giving you the true upward direction from an earthly aspect. I can only do the best that my spiritual powers will allow.”

“Countless obstacles I know, Minerva ; but you have furnished me with the key to the secret, and I doubt not that some man in time will be able clearly to define which is the true upward direction.”

“Ah, sir ! You do not know, you cannot realise what the hidden secret is which it is your duty to unfold. Man will appreciate it all in time, when he becomes capable of estimating the importance of your discoveries. At first, in his ignorance, he will be overcome with amazement and incredulity, but in time it will dawn upon him, when he realises his true position—for no intelligent man can argue away or ignore any of my statements !—and then, and not until then, will he appreciate the value of your discoveries. Your discoveries, I say, for that is the correct way in which to put it. Individually I have no interest in obtaining for you this information, for as information it is of no value whatever to me, and does not interest me in the least. I am merely discharging my duty, and advancing my future welfare by disclosing these secrets to you. You are the person who discovers the information, and more credit is due to you than even to the most accomplished discoverer or inventor who has ever lived on earth, for not only have you made these discoveries but you have revealed the way in which all inventions and discoveries are imparted to man, and the reason why they are permitted by the Omnipotent Father. You are the means by which the information is transferred from a spiritual source to the eager brain of man, and hence in earthly eyes deservedly the discoverer. But this point is not fully explained yet, for I have still something more to say upon it for the benefit of man, and to prove the entirety of the spiritworld, as well as the necessary dependence it has upon the material existence.

But now your body is calling out loudly for you, so I shall defer my remarks until a future occasion."

The strain upon my brain, occasioned by my two visits to the sun on consecutive nights, must have been greater than I was aware of, for the next time I ventured to personate my spiritual form my condition was such that I could not fully control my spiritual powers. They would not respond to my demands when with my teachers, and there seemed to be a lack of vitality in them that greatly interfered with the harmony which is always so necessary in all spiritual doings. No doubt this want of energy only affected that portion of the brain brought into active operation during my visits to the spiritworld, but then these worn-out properties were the very faculties which I needed in such an abstruse undertaking as this. Such being the case I did not, nay, I could not remain long, for my brain seemed to be swimming and dazed.

The next occasion was more successful, for I had again complete control over my powers. The different senses of my brain, brought into play in this remarkable work, as distinct from those actually employed in my material life, were active and acute, and were able to receive impressions from my distant powers with marked distinctness, for it is the brain's capacity which must necessarily be my limit.

When I was myself again in the spiritworld I instinctively longed for information upon the subject which Minerva had previously promised to explain; therefore, after our usual greetings, we resumed the conversation at the stage where we had left off on my last visit. I was aware that the topic to be discussed was to be a further explanation of "Upwards." This direction, and the explanation of it, does not seem difficult at first sight, but it is infinitely more complicated the deeper one meditates over it, and these complications in a great measure arise from material causes, hence they appeared to me to be unworthy obstacles to the knowledge of a subject which possesses such important interest to us all.

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The point upon which I wanted more light had no direct reference to this earth alone, but only when taken in conjunction with the spiritworld as a whole, and the Omnipotent working of it.

My recent experiments had revealed to me the fact that spirits, when free from the immediate attraction of the earth, and when under the laws of space, always assume one position, and that always the same whenever and wherever I met them, namely, heads upwards towards heaven ; and now I was anxious to know the reason, so forthwith I asked Minerva for an explanation.

“Well, sir,” she began, “in itself, from a general standpoint, it is very natural, for this region, the First Sphere, is the basis of all work in the spiritworld, inasmuch as it is the starting-point from which all souls begin the existence of separation from their eternal properties. All, as you know, undergo the test in a material body constructed for this special purpose, and are limited to the laws which govern this body. All souls must necessarily begin thus for reasons you very well know. Now this existence is temporary in its nature, and for one purpose only, then, when it is over, the soul is branded for all future eternity with its distinguishing properties. The soul is then confined in a spiritual body which either prevents it from or allows it to progress, therefore this region is the foundation upon which the entire spiritworld depends, for it establishes the basis upon which all spiritual progress is allowed. Hence spirits assume the natural position of heads upwards, for all spirits who are entitled to advance are going in that direction—upwards towards heaven, onwards towards the Father !”

“Then, Minerva, is this law applicable to all the spheres, or do spirits in the upper spheres have other laws to govern them ?”

“Well, sir, such is the law here, in this sphere ; other spheres are regions beyond this one, but as we are not at present interested in them let this explanation be sufficient. To consider the laws which govern spheres

beyond this one, where conditions are gradually advanced towards a state of perfection totally beyond comparison with this, the lowest sphere, is a subject almost too abstruse for man to grasp."

"Yes, Minerva. I fully understand and realise that the upper spheres are what you say—beyond man's power to grasp; indeed, I only speak the truth when I say that this, the first and lowest sphere, is as nearly as possible beyond the power of my brain to comprehend."

"True! Knowledge is only allowed on a very limited scale to all those who are held in this sphere—but, sir, this surely is only what ought to be expected when one considers the general purposes of the spiritworld."

"Thanks, Minerva. Now what are those lights which I constantly see in this sphere at odd times in my journeys?"

"Well, sir, we shall explain them to you."

There was one of them far away upon my right-hand side. It appeared to me, as I looked at it, simply a mass of light, fully as bright as the brightness of a faithful spirit, but its size was enormous in comparison. Its shape was long and more or less cylindrical, widest in the centre, and it lay balanced horizontally in space. I had frequently seen these lights before, and at first attributed them to faulty development of my visual power, but of late I had approached close to and endeavoured to examine them.

Like everything else in this wonderful world, I knew that they must be there for some purpose, but what that purpose was I had failed to make out. All my efforts at explanation were fruitless, for there was nothing visible save the brightness itself. Clearly it was not a spirit, nor an angel, for there was no attraction towards it, nor yet was there any feeling of the presence of life, which is always unmistakably felt by me when in near vicinity to any living form.

I had formed ideas of my own about them, but I suppose only by way of accounting to myself for their being so

regularly stationed all over this region around the earth.

This intense desire to satisfy my curiosity is a pronounced feature in my spiritual form when any points or conditions are present before me unexplained, yet, on the other hand, I frequently pass them with little or no attention. I am of the opinion that this curiosity is alone prominent concerning that which is within the scope of my power to obtain information upon, for its limits are so well defined as to suggest some definite reason for either its presence or its absence. But, again, when once this curiosity has been aroused it is surprising how soon it is satisfied by a few explanations from Minerva or Marian ; then it suddenly disappears never to manifest itself again upon that topic, for whatever my spiritual self knows it fully understands and believes, as everything that is explained to me is very lucidly expounded, and the interpretation is so entirely within the bounds of commonsense that any further ground for doubt or argument is swept away from beneath my feet. So much for the good properties of a faithful spirit, and so much for the advantage of having a complete language ! We looked then at this brightness, there for a definite reason, but as yet a mystery to me.

“ Well, sir,” began Minerva, “ that brightness is the power which rules this locality or immediate radius of space. It is the power which collects all information of all doings within its compass, and transmits such information to the angel in charge of this particular region. This angel remains in his sphere—the Sixth ; he knows everything that takes place here, for such is his mission. That power, you now see, especially attracts all acts of irregularity or discord, and all forms of workings that are not in complete harmony with the regulations required here. Thus the angel in charge of this mission knows exactly when any spirit is disturbing the general harmony, and forthwith takes measures to restore it again.

“ This sphere, you know, is a region inhabited and

frequented by all classes of spirits and by man. Of spirits the very great majority are not servants of the Godhead, for here evil spirits are confined, and they are opposed to Him, and others are indifferent, hence the doings of all have to be supervised so that harmony may prevail. If this power to maintain harmony did not exist, then there would be nothing but disorder and confusion here, and the very presence of such would prove that God was not Omnipotent and Supreme Power. For the above reason all conditions, actions, and workings antagonistic to the harmony ordained for this sphere are conveyed to the overruling angel of this particular locality.

“Harmony in this sphere is equivalent to peace in the upper spheres. But, sir, you cannot fail to recognise the terrible power of concentrated evil continually at war with peace; hence peace is not a property to be looked for here, so that the most that can be expected is harmony. You know that upon your earth there is no such condition as peace in its true meaning, and even harmony is rare, for upon the earth all types of eternal souls, from one extreme to the other, are instinctively manifesting their unchangeable properties; all equally endowed with power to say and do what is natural to them, and no authority is there, save that of man, to restrict any from contravening the ordinances necessary to harmony, hence the misery of man. But this region, on the spiritual side, is not so given to freedom, in the sense of distinguishing features in each spirit, for, although it is in the same sphere as the earth, still it is advanced one step beyond, where millions of millions of spirits of all shades of evil are allowed to wander about at large, and practically do what they like.

“Besides the evil spirits, who are permanently confined to this sphere, all other classes of spirits are here for various purposes—some to amuse themselves and others working missions—so that there is a heterogeneous collection of all kinds, with evil in an overwhelming

majority. Such being the case, the Father in His wisdom has deemed it necessary that harmony, at any rate, shall be maintained here. This power, then, which you now behold enforces harmony upon all spirits indiscriminately in this sphere."

"Your explanation, Minerva, is very interesting and very convincing. I understand, then, that this power attracts all conditions and doings in this region,—but how is it done? How are the discordant acts conveyed to this power? Does it draw them by means of its inherent attractive properties?"

"Yes, sir, that is exactly the case. Everything antagonistic to harmony takes up a current of its own, for this is in accordance with spiritual law. This current is immediately attracted to one of these stationary powers, and is instantly transmitted to the angel in charge, hence through this current all transgressing spirits are at the mercy of this powerful angel."

"Then I suppose the punishment will suit the crime—or are they punished at all?"

"They are rebuked, and with power to terrify them."

"Exactly. I perceive that laws here are rigidly enforced, nor yet does there appear to be any loophole for escape. I suppose punishment will be meted out as soon as the offence is committed?"

"Yes, sir, that is so. The rebuke is hurled back while the trespass is still being committed."

"Indeed! But what about those powerful angels I have seen stationed at intervals all over this region? Are they here also for the same purpose?"

"No, sir. Those angels you saw are there for the purpose of keeping law amongst evil spirits only, in a way which necessitates the presence of these powers, whereas this power to prevent discord applies to all spirits of all classes when occasion requires. Perhaps to man the distinguishing difference between the two may not be clearly understood, but to spirits there is a vast difference."

"Oh yes, Minerva, I quite understand now. These powers are then stationed all over this sphere, each governing a section allotted out to one particular spirit? But does the angel in control over this region, or any other, always remain in his sphere?"

"Yes, sir. Their duties require that these powers be thus stationed, but they themselves have no need to leave their sphere."

"Certainly, Minerva, this is electricity to perfection! How convenient if I could do my little work as easily, by having refined electricity to help me—not that I am lazy, of course, Minerva; but you know what I mean?"

"I think, sir, your forms themselves are a study in electricity—are they not?"

"Quite right; when I am reminded of it; but I was referring to electricity in the form visible in what you have just explained; mine, you know, is complicated beyond understanding, but I suppose when the power of these angels is explained it will prove not to be so very mysterious?"

"Indeed, sir, this power is simple when understood. It is a mystery only so long as it is veiled from you. Man at present is not capable of grasping its simplicity merely because he has not yet been permitted to do so!"

"I have not the slightest doubt but that it will prove to be simple when explained, for everything that I have yet come across in this world, although quite beyond comprehension at first sight, is easy to understand when elucidated; it seems to be only a question of knowing how."

"Yes, sir, certainly; but it is the 'knowing how' wherein the secret lies, for until the permission is given the 'knowing how' is in abeyance. A mystery often looks stupendous when unrevealed, but once draw back the veil and the simplicity of the previous mystery becomes apparent."

"True, Minerva. But where man is brought to a standstill is at the inability to draw back the veil. He

cannot do it at a wish, but is compelled to wait patiently, or impatiently, for some one else to have the privilege of revealing it to him. In the past it has been an unsolvable problem to man, as you know, Minerva, why one should be able to settle a vexed question, discover a new theory, or invent some ingenious machine, when his presumably more intelligent and learned fellow-creatures have been cogitating their brains for years upon the same propositions but with no practical or material result ! It was a mystery, but now that the reason has been given, where is the mystery ? ”

“ Yes, sir. Your world is a world of mysteries.”

“ It seems to me, Minerva, that wherever one is one is facing mysteries all the time. In this world it is just the same as upon the earth, but they seem upon a higher level altogether. With me the desire for more knowledge is almost invariably the forerunner to coming explanations ; this in itself is a mystery, Minerva.”

“ Yes, sir ; that is indeed a mystery. But like all its kind it is quite simple, for a mystery does not constitute a mystery to your brain if it cannot be solved ; it is simply past recognition. The actual discovery of a mystery reveals the capacity of the brain to recognise it as such, hence it is capable of grasping the explanation. In theory, sir, what I have just stated is correct, but in practice the brain may only be capable of detecting as a mystery that which is really a portion of another mystery, unrecognisable as a whole, as you know by experience.”

“ Of course, I know what you say must be true ; but if a mystery, being part of another mystery, is recognised by the brain and explained as one by itself, surely that is equal to a smaller mystery completely explained ? ”

“ Oh no, sir ! In theory an incomplete mystery cannot be explained at all. The point must first be recognised in its entirety by the brain before it is capable of receiving explanations.”

“ But will not the answer given arouse the brain to a recognition of the whole mystery ? ”

“Well, sir, that is just the point wherein comes the difference between theory and practice. If a minor mystery embraces almost the entire major mystery, then I answer—yes! but if only a small portion of the complete mystery is recognised by the brain, then the answer will not be answer enough to satisfy the inquiries of the brain, nor yet will it be sufficient to arouse the brain to a recognition of the whole mystery. It will tend to confuse the brain to such an extent that it will refuse the answer as not coming within the laws of reason.”

“Then the power of reason is not altogether a correct power; it is faulty in its capacity?”

“Yes, sir. It is a limited power, but essential to the condition of man.”

“Exactly, Minerva. Then if reasoning, as you say, is a limited power in man, surely it must be of a similar quality in spirits, but upon a higher scale?”

“Certainly. Spirits are by no means perfect, but they are so very differently constituted from man that theories and ideas, which are reasonable to the latter, are sometimes rejected by spiritual beings either as valueless, or too trivial, or incomplete, or too degrading.”

“Yes, I realise that, of course, Minerva; for man is limited closely all round, while spirits are privileged according to their positions and attainments.”

“Yes, sir. Man is literally surrounded mentally by a network of mysteries, evil, nonsense, frivolousness, and all such like deterring and inferior influences, that he, with the measure of intelligence he possesses, has to pick and choose what he thinks is correct as far as his powers of reason will allow him.”

“Minerva! You make man cut a small figure as far as his knowledge is concerned, whereas he himself is fully satisfied that he is very intelligent.”

“In that you mistake me, sir. I have no cause to imply such a thing; I state facts! Man is very intelligent as far as he in his own limited circumstances is concerned.

Look at his forefathers who inhabited this earth thousands of years before him ! Compare the two—the man with little more than brute instinct ; the man with educated scientific knowledge ;—surely there is a vast difference ? ”

“ I admit what you say, Minerva ; but at the same time there are many even learned men who derive satisfaction from consulting the opinions of these ancestors—especially upon religion—which have been left on record.”

“ That, sir, is simply their desire to progress. They forget, nay, they do not realise the true state of affairs—that the world is advancing for the sole reason of raising man nearer to his God as time proceeds. They fail to recognise that their ancestors were privileged altogether in a different way ; knowledge was far from being their strong point ! ”

“ Well, Minerva, it seems to me that man is still a long way from having knowledge as his strong point.”

“ No, sir, not quite that ! when the two conditions are compared, for it would be unfair to man to compare him with any save his own ancestors. In this comparison he is very intelligent, but of course his knowledge is extremely limited from a spiritual standpoint. This universe, sir, is a combination of studies for spirits during eternity, if they were permitted or chose to make it such ; even then they would only be beginning. Knowledge can ever be increased but it never can reach perfection, for perfection in knowledge can only be eternal—it cannot be attained. The Godhead, alone, possesses perfect and complete knowledge ! ”

“ Then, Minerva, according to that it is utterly useless for any spirit to try and attain to perfect knowledge. It is a property innately peculiar to God alone, for He only is eternally complete and unlimited.”

“ Yes, sir, that is so ;—God alone is Perfect ! ”

“ But, Minerva, suppose a spirit, endowed with great power and permission to acquire knowledge, devoted his

attention entirely and uninterruptedly to this end throughout the countless ages of eternity, do you not think the eventual condition to which he would attain would crowd perfect knowledge very closely, always recognising the fact that a spirit is able to acquire knowledge infinitely quicker than man ? ”

“ Well, sir, you see that is no argument at all. Perfect knowledge and increasing knowledge are two very different properties. Perfect knowledge is knowledge in perfection ;—if you think you will soon perceive that it is a distinct condition peculiar to itself ; it necessarily always must have been so, consequently it always will remain so—it is an eternal property ! Increasing knowledge never can be anything else, for it is eternally increasing, so never can attain perfection. For example : a man or a spirit studies one subject deeply and thoroughly, and reaches a condition of almost perfect mastery over it ; this condition arrived at, he is brought to a standstill because his knowledge upon this subject and ignorance upon all others hopelessly clash at this point ;—you allow me this much, do you not ? ”

“ Well, yes. You mean that consummate knowledge upon one subject and ignorance upon all others is an incompatible condition in one brain, but such a condition is purely imaginary, is it not, Minerva ? ”

“ Well, sir, imaginary if you choose to put it that way—but this is merely for argument’s sake. Man in a sense is in this condition, for he is ever discontented with himself. Some of his powers are greater than others, and some senses superior to others, hence this condition generally—but to the point. This knowledge, immensely developed in one direction, is hemmed in greatly by ignorance in general upon other subjects ; consequently, as a necessary result of this condition an unlimited number of mysteries arise which would not have been the case had this knowledge been more evenly divided upon all subjects alike. Again, suppose it were possible to acquire knowledge equally upon all subjects, none

omitted, the time would come when a condition would be reached where each subject would have its own circle of mysteries. This being so, when general knowledge has attained to a certain level it is in itself a network of mysteries, and the more the student determines to unravel the combination of mysteries the more hopelessly he becomes entangled, because he starts ignorant of everything—imperfect—therefore is incapable of grasping all mysteries. Man is rapidly approaching this condition, therefore each one will be compelled to devote his attention to one subject alone ; and this prospective condition in man is also apparent in the spiritworld, although spirits have immensely superior powers of attaining knowledge to those of man. But if spirits possess this advantage they have also a hundred times greater mysteries confronting them, and these ever increase and expand as a spirit advances, until he is compelled to turn his attention to one particular study alone, if he in any way wishes to master it.

“ Take, for instance, myself. My study for the present is to enlighten mankind through yourself, and I am alone interested in that work. But as a matter of fact, it is unworthy of the name of knowledge, yet it occupies my entire attention to gather the information, to decide how to impart it, and to arrange the numerous small points in this extraordinary revelation. You must realise that what I give you as information is information to human minds only, but spiritual information reaches a very different and higher level, therefore to execute my duty properly entails an enormous amount of work upon a condition not adapted to the purpose. Surely you can see how hopeless it is for any spirit, no matter how intelligent or how privileged, to become perfect in knowledge ? It is stupendous and altogether totally beyond the powers of any spirit, even during eternity which knows no end ! ”

“ Then all I can say, Minerva, is that Perfect Knowledge is not only beyond the human power of apprecia-

tion, but it is beyond all comprehension save by Perfect Knowledge itself."

"That is so, sir ; but Perfect Knowledge is so inseparably bound up with Perfect Power that to have the former necessitates possession of the latter, and God alone is Omnipotent and Omniscient !"

When I again ventured into that region of wonders my great expectation was to have some new subject to discuss with Minerva, or some fresh mystery to solve. As a matter of fact, I had several points in my mind upon which I wanted information, and past experience had taught me that I had not long to wait before explanations would be forthcoming.

During the past few weeks I have obtained a vast amount of information in the spiritworld which I simply cannot translate into words. The impressions are floating about in my brain, but they seem too delicate and fragile to bear the rough handling of words to explain them. How I long to lay hold of them mentally, and reduce them to written language, but so far they have defied all my efforts.

Discharging my duty under such circumstances becomes a very difficult and unsatisfactory task, for to have these fine and very important items of information almost at hand and not to be allowed to grasp them myself and impart them to others is annoying in the extreme. It may be that they have no equivalents in human language, or it may be that my faculties are not sufficiently developed, or that the information is not for the general perusal of man. Whichever it is I know not, but my own firm impression is that, as my spiritual self is altogether a different property from my material body, so these two really very dissimilar conditions do not always respond to the demands one of another. My spiritual part sees everything as well as knows whatever is explained to it, and transmits the current of information to my brain, but this brain is only capable of realising so much, and

that which is beyond its power to handle properly leaves but a delicate, indefinable impression upon it.

Whenever I do make a determined effort to grapple with this unapproachable information it seems to aggravate my brain, and upset the balance of harmony, so that a peculiar condition is established in it, not tending to make me eager to prosecute my labours in the spirit-world. Indeed, I feel my brain strangely influencing me not again to personate my spirit form. This feeling is quite apart from my will, or indeed from my desire to continue this work, but, nevertheless, it requires a great effort before I can transport my personality. I frequently linger in the very act, almost powerless to go in either direction ; then the infection sometimes spreads to my body, as if my brain were determined to keep me back. The muscles of my limbs keep on twitching, and my eyelids have the habit of opening slightly, but quite sufficient to draw me back instantly.

These and other small points, trivial in themselves, have their effect, however, and I have alluded to them solely to point out how my body behaves towards me until I have concentrated my earnest attention upon some object in the spiritworld, or have my interest sufficiently attracted ; then I am my spiritual self to perfection. The greater the attraction of circumstances, conditions, or objects, the more completely am I present ; but all these points in connection with my mysterious, though quite natural, spiritual entity, when there, are very obscure.

At times I almost know all the mysteries I have solved in the unseen spiritworld, then again they are lost ; in fact, they seem to come in waves to my mind, advancing and receding, but with no lasting impression. I think such waves are essentially waves of spiritual information in an electric form, but they are just beyond my normal powers of obtaining and marking down mentally for future reference.

When in the act of making my present visit the feeling

of numbness in my brain was very pronounced. It seemed to shut off all connection, so that I did not know where I was, and I felt quite incapable of doing anything. Whether this numbness was caused by over-taxing my immature new powers, or was the natural result of the brain being deprived of its normal properties, I am not prepared to say. Whatever it was due to I do not think it of much importance, and deem it attributable in some way to the hypernatural circumstances under which I am absolutely compelled to prosecute my researches. But I am in powerful hands, who see and know exactly the amount of strain my brain is capable of bearing.

After our usual salutations were performed, and when I had taken my bearings of space, Minerva mentioned the course she had decided upon that I should pursue in the immediate future. She said that it would be most in keeping with my fast developing powers, as well as advisable for my own benefit, to make myself fully acquainted with spirits as I found them. I was becoming more powerful in all respects, just in proportion as I was increasing my knowledge, and now Minerva considered that I was competent to investigate this intricate subject.

I had a very good idea of the gigantic task awaiting me, and was equally aware that of all the knowledge obtained only a very small portion could possibly be accepted by my brain, and eventually put on record. On this account I had just a little hesitation about investigating the subject.

Interviewing different spirits is all right in a way, and I have no objection to that branch of the work, but, as I have previously stated, asking questions is quite out of keeping with the general conduct of this world, and is by no means an effective way to obtain information; and how much of these conversations, carried on with lightning rapidity, would be transferred to my brain?—however, I can but do my best.

The intention is that I shall examine evil spirits first,

in regard to their spiritual life, occupations, interests, and amusements, as viewed from my own or an earthly standpoint; then afterwards see what I am able to learn about frivolous spirits, to be followed by any items of interest obtainable from any other spirits outside these two classes; and I shall report to the best of my ability all conversations with those spirits from whom I have been able to procure any information.

After we had settled upon the direction in which my future work should lie, Minerva decided that Marian and the stranger should accompany me on all my tours of investigation. Before starting out upon my new mission Minerva determined to try a somewhat unique experiment upon my poor, ill-used body, in order to see how far it could really be stripped of its properties without cutting it adrift entirely from the soul and spiritual powers.

The experiment was tried, and with satisfactory results, for in my spiritual form I came considerably nearer being a full-fledged spirit than heretofore. I could see spirits very distinctly, and quite natural they appeared to my spiritual self, but how very different from what man would expect!

“Man would expect!”—there is nothing here that man would expect to see. In the first place he does not know what he would expect to see, hence he can only picture in his mind a material panorama as nearly in keeping with my definitions as possible.

In the second place he cannot appreciate what the perceptive faculties are here, necessary to learn anything about this world. There is absolutely no comparison between any of them and the corresponding properties in man. They are a source of wonder even to myself, and I use them constantly—all, without any exception—and the power of spiritual vision is totally beyond my comprehension. The way in which they are employed, also, can scarcely be grasped by man with his composite powers, all capable of being exercised at once—seeing, hearing,

smelling, feeling, walking, thinking, &c. Here there is no such combination of properties, all are separate, and exercised one at a time to the exclusion of all the others. Nothing is seen unless the desire to see is manifested, then only that is visible which the mind wishes to see, and while this power is engaged in beholding some new object nothing else can be done. The same applies to all the other powers, and the use of them ; nevertheless, they are completely adapted to their requirements, and, however strange it may appear to man, they are of a higher order altogether than any properties which he possesses.

The feeling of peace and happiness I enjoy, apart from the incessant nagging of my body to return, if possessed in a greater degree by spirits, must tend to make their existence very charming. The whole aspect of the spiritworld presents a new front, and death is robbed of its dismal associations as of the mysterious disappearance of its victim, but looms out as a beacon-light to some safe harbour after the stormy voyage of life.

CHAPTER VI

“ A SPIRIT HATH NOT FLESH AND BONES ”

It did not take us very long to complete all preparations previous to beginning our journey of exploration amongst spirits, in order to obtain from them all the information possible about their habits of life.

Evil spirits being nearest the earth, and also a class with whom I had already been slightly brought in contact, I therefore was naturally desirous to begin with them first, but I did not exactly know how I was going to extract any particulars from them. The supposition was that of course I could communicate with them just as easily as with Minerva and Marian, but was it as certain that they could converse with me, or that I could grasp the import of their remarks? I had a strong presentiment that many of their ways were so entirely unknown to man that he has not even words wherewith to interpret them. However, it remained to be seen whether the currents of information with which they impressed my spiritual form could or could not be accepted by my brain.

We started out upon our investigation, Marian and myself, with the stranger following close behind, and were not long in reaching the abode of evil spirits around this earth. We found them as usual in groups, swarming over the whole landscape like a plague of locusts, but we kept on moving until one spirit in particular attracted my attention. I decided to question him, and quite naturally utilised my power to hold him where he was until I had accomplished my purpose. He was a typical evil spirit, and a good average sample of his class. In

figure he was rather tall, considerably obscured by the surrounding darkness of evil power, and his general aspect wore a look of degradation. Still, he did not appear to me as miserable as some I had seen, for that dejected, withered appearance, so common in this class of spirits, was not markedly prominent in this case.

Thus I stood facing him, but as I was totally ignorant of the ways and habits of evil spirits I scarcely knew how to begin questioning him, and as Marian was now some distance behind I could not turn to her for assistance.

At last, after some delay, I broke the ice by asking him bare facts about his existence, but of his answers I could neither make one thing nor another. I knew that he replied to me in the ordinary way which spirits of this class have of conversing, but the gist of his remarks was entirely beyond my power of comprehension. Answers in the negative or affirmative I could understand, but these by themselves were of no practical value for my present purpose.

After persevering for some time in my efforts to grasp his meaning I was compelled to give it up as a bad job, then I exercised my power to force him away. Immediately afterwards I felt sorry that I had acted somewhat harshly towards him, but at that moment I was slightly annoyed at my want of success. He had baffled me, without a doubt, and it was quite within the range of possibility that he had done it intentionally, or perhaps he might have been amusing himself at my expense.

Once again I looked about for another evil spirit upon whom to try my apprentice hand, and soon detected one to my satisfaction apart from a group immediately on my left. As on the previous occasion, I pounced upon this unsuspecting form of evil life. It was distinctly different in appearance from anything of the kind I had personally examined before. It was of a larger size than usual, and the power of evil surrounding it was less pronounced. The impression imparted to me was that it was the figure of a stout woman, and the feeling

about her presence was less repulsive than I had ever previously felt when mixing with evil spirits. Such being the case I addressed her with less reluctance than I evinced when accosting the last spirit, and asked her a simple question about the way in which she passed her everyday life, but as before I was foiled at the very start, for I could not understand one word of her reply. It was clearly to be seen that my questions were intelligible to my subject, hence I persevered for some time with the hope of being able to catch snatches of her answers. Some I did grasp, of others only a slight impression, but most frequently I knew absolutely nothing of what she said.

Whether she spoke in a *patois* peculiar to this class of spirit, or was telling me something that my brain refused to accept, or was fooling me, I cannot say; however, one thing is certain, that the answers were not doctored up to my understanding, for they were nothing more nor less than jargon to me. No; it was not a success, but a very palpable failure! and I wondered how I was going to cope with it, or educate myself to comprehend such unintelligible observations.

With great regret I abandoned the attempt, and retired to Marian to tell her of my failure. It was a relief to me, at any rate, to understand what she said, for it proved that my communicating properties were not at fault.

We seriously discussed this unfortunate situation. In my present condition it seemed quite impossible for me to converse successfully with these uncultured natives of this sphere, therefore I must either be allowed more power before beginning this work in earnest, or get Marian to interpret the answers for me.

We returned to Minerva, and I reported to her the full extent of my unsuccessful efforts. She was of the opinion that I had better rest myself for some time and refresh my brain before renewing the attempt; and Marian volunteered to be interpreter.

This advice I am satisfied was very sound, for during the last few weeks I have undergone much in the spirit-world necessitating great expenditure of power, especially my late excursions among evil spirits, and my brain was now suffering from exhaustion. Indeed, I feel that the time is not far off when I shall be compelled to abandon my researches for the present, for the entire business is a very unnatural strain upon a material structure not adapted to the purpose.

These points satisfactorily arranged, I bid my companions adieu and retired to my body, there to think over what had happened that night ; and upon the whole it was just what one might have expected, and what I almost did anticipate.

It must not be supposed that I have not already had considerable dealings with evil spirits, and been brought face to face with them, so that now I am well acquainted with their ways, as well as how to cope with them successfully—not, however, upon the level of the spiritworld, but in a condition when I am almost completely at their mercy, and they possess the power natural to their existence to take advantage over my dormant senses.

It has been mentioned elsewhere that one cannot open his back door—if I may use this expression—into the spiritworld with impunity. It is the natural transgressing upon the confines of the supernatural, and that in its worst and most depraved locality.

Enough, I think, has already been written to explain in a lucid manner how this comes about, and how everybody, who once deliberately has dealings with spirits, must be prepared to meet with a condition he never anticipated, and upon which he would not take advice.

Once the locks and bolts are undone and the door opened, no matter how securely you may think you have refastened them, just as sure as it has once been opened so will it open again, even against your will ; for if the will-power be sufficiently strong to keep it shut, still, when that power is in abeyance and the body asleep, spirits

will of their own power again unlock this door and take you unawares!—a thief in the night stealing in upon your dormant faculties, overpowering your senses and temporarily taking up his abode in your body!

This has been done to me several times, and the recollection of these awful experiences makes me almost shudder to encounter evil spirits. The dread is in my inmost self, but upon the surface and in my will-power I am eager for the fray, so that I may come off conqueror, for I have had dealings enough with them to feel convinced that I know how to handle them, how to cope with them, and how slowly and surely to outweigh their power; but for all that I recognise the advisability of leaving them alone except when absolutely necessary.

In most instances the intrusion has been but slight, for I have been able to arouse my senses and get the upper hand easily, and once I am able to open my eyes, or move myself, all is gone, and I am in possession of my body again, but it is the getting of the upper hand that is so trying and exhausting.

One instance I should like to relate which stands out pre-eminently in my mind as the most terrible struggle of its kind that it has ever been my lot to face; it lasted half the night, and left me exhausted to the last degree when it was over.

I was asleep; my mind was airily threading its way through some nonsensical dream when I saw an ugly, haggard, decrepid form in the distance—the image of an evil spirit, but then I had not examined one; faster and faster it approached and obliterated everything in my previous dream by its intense darkness. I had the instinctive feeling that danger was at hand, so retired to the door of the house of my dream. On this evil one came, and imperiously beckoned me back into the house! In my terror I clutched at it, but was forced to retreat from room to room until I was crushed into an inner corner in complete darkness. I now realised what was

the matter, as well as the kind of power against which I was at present contending, and my whole body felt in a terrible state of corruption at the hands of this vile fiend. Now I rushed at him, and we closed in combat ; again he bore me down, and I heard my back break with his overwhelming power doubling me in two. I fell exhausted, and saw crowds of other evil spirits gather around enjoying the fun. Again I sprang up and attacked him, by no means willing to succumb. We wrestled in earnest, and I strenuously endeavoured to drive him out by the way in which he had entered. Now the room was full of them, and I was slowly forced back into the corner, where I lay completely powerless. The evil monster then paced up and down the room, ever keeping a menacing eye upon me and daring me to move ; the others then vanished into the outer rooms. His terrible power was slowly mastering my will, and I felt myself gradually becoming subjected to his influence. There he was, possessor of my property, and every time I tried to rise a look from him forced me back again ! The dream now ceased, as if of its own accord worn out, but not the fight ! My poor body was what he wanted possession of, and the peculiar feeling of being forced away from one's own body is beyond explanation. I was awake now, and exerted my utmost power to shout, but my senses were under his control. Again and again I repeated the effort ; I tried hard to get up, but could not move ; a huge weight seemed to be crushing in my chest ; my throat was gripped as in a vice, and my whole frame was numb and useless. I felt that I was actually choking and being forced away from my body, but, no, I would not leave go altogether. I still had some will-power left, so hung on tenaciously, and did my utmost to exorcise him. My strength was completely exhausted, but the power with which I held on to my body was simply inexhaustible, therefore I was satisfied that he could not shake me off entirely. Just then I felt a snap—some tension had given way—and I was

nearer my body. I followed up this advantage and hurled myself upon him to force him away, only, however, to be compelled to retreat the more until I felt that I was sufficiently in possession of my bodily powers to try and use them. All my efforts were now called into play to raise a shout, concentrated to the last degree, but just as I seemed about to succeed I was overborne by his rallying power and driven back once more; the weight was again upon my chest, and the effort to choke me renewed. Then, in still better possession of my body, I made a last determined struggle, hurled him back and exercised my full power to make a noise; a gurgling sound came from my throat—it was enough! the spell was broken, the tension gave way, and I was alone. The sound that I had made gave me possession of my faculties, thus forcing my adversary away, for I was in full control of my body again, although not able to realise for some time that such was the case. I had literally been almost choked, and all I could do at first was to lie panting from sheer exhaustion. Then, to my astonishment, I found that I was shaking all over, and my skin, night-dress, and the pillow were wet with sweat.

As soon as I had cooled down and pulled myself together I made inquiries of Marian about what had happened. She told me exactly what had occurred, and that she had done her utmost to help me, but that this powerful fiend and his accomplices were so strongly in possession that she could do but little to assist me, for once an evil spirit has a concentrated hold over his victim others are powerless to interfere.

When I had carefully reviewed my late situation I was forcibly persuaded that I had acquitted myself very creditably; indeed, I think that I am fairly entitled to claim a victory over this contemptible thief. This in itself was something to encourage me, and in a measure was a sop to compensate me for the horror of the position.

This experience was the first of the kind inflicted upon me, and I consider it the worst—at any rate it stands

out pre-eminently in my estimation as more terrible than any that followed.

Another attempt was made last night, after I had gone to sleep, and I have a strong impression that it was by the same evil spirit I had just interviewed. It was mild in comparison with my first combat, still it was carried to such a pitch that I was compelled to endeavour to shout for help. It ended very abruptly, and I quickly forced my powers into my spiritual form and gave chase to this hell-hound in the spiritworld. It is quite a different thing chasing a spirit from running down a man, and although I could not catch him yet I turned the tables upon him with a vengeance, to his terrified amazement. I followed him for long, always keenly watching him, and concentrating my will-power over him. He dodged and turned times innumerable, but could not escape me ; he seemed spell-bound, for I could detect him constantly looking back in a sheepish way at me. When I thought that I had thoroughly shown him that I could play the same game back, follow him into his own world and use power over him similar, or corresponding in a degree, to that which he had concentrated upon me in my sleep, I returned, and I am fully satisfied that, at any rate, that evil spirit has had such a scare that he will think twice before he visits me again.

These experiences may possibly be regarded as trivial, nevertheless they have established in my mind a dread of encountering these fiends when in my material condition, but when once the contest begins in earnest I am prepared to follow out the various phases of a regular pitched battle with all the power at my command. That natural property of my material being, that instinct of the brain, "self preservation," develops itself to a marvellous degree !—it is a grand quality allowed man, and he does not realise its value until it is brought into operation, and thus proves that it is equal to the occasion.

Having opened the door of my brain to the ingress of any visitor from the spiritworld the invitation is quite

unique in its nature and is, of course, readily taken advantage of; but it is no easy task to understand, first, the ways of evil spirits, and then to know how to deal with them.

Frivolous spirits seldom or never attempt to use their influence over me, for I consider my temperament too phlegmatic to be disturbed by their nonsense. If they do by chance come to me I soon detect them whenever they try to force themselves upon me. They sometimes, as I have stated before, attempt to personate Minerva or Marian, but with no satisfactory result to themselves, for when I almost immediately find them out, the thought of such underhand work rubs me up the wrong way, and I instantly pounce upon them and drive them away. Once or twice, out of sheer curiosity to see what they would say, I have invited them to communicate with me, but have never been able to extract the least item of satisfaction from them. They cannot talk anything but what is meaningless and vapid, with no particular end in view. They have no power to express themselves, and are too frivolous to converse in the way in which I am accustomed when dealing with powerful, thoughtful spirits and angels. I treat them as if they were unworthy of any consideration; but with evil spirits the case is entirely different—they will not be offended, such a thing is above their notice!

A week elapsed before I again visited the spiritworld and renewed my efforts to gain information about evil spirits. Now that it had been arranged that Marian should act as interpreter, should be the one to receive all answers from evil spirits—communicated in currents beyond acceptance by my brain—and convey them to my mind in a manner intelligible to it, I fully expected that the work would progress much more satisfactorily than it had done.

On my first essay I determined to question one spirit only so as to avoid any likelihood of getting confused or exhausted, which might possibly be the case if too much

were attempted ; besides, it takes considerable power to question one thoroughly, for the fact of being directly in contact with evil enables the power of evilness to exercise its very exhausting influence to the best advantage.

No time was wasted, after I had personated my spiritual form, in repairing to the region which I had previously visited. Marian accompanied me, and the stranger assumed his customary position behind us both.

Spirits were there as usual, as many as I wanted, and for the most part were congregated in groups ; but it took me considerable time before I met any who satisfied me as being promising subjects for interrogation. At last I met one who, to my vision, appeared a harmless-looking object and seemed contented both with himself and with everything in general as he stood there alone. He did not make the slightest attempt to move as we came to a sudden stop immediately in front of and above him, and as he looked like a typical sample of a certain class of evil spirits I told Marian that I intended to question him. To this she agreed, and bid me descend towards him and state my purpose.

This operation was but momentary in its performance, so I stood in front of him and politely acquainted him with my intention. This done I glanced around for Marian, who at once descended to my level and remained at my left side, between myself and my subject, who was facing me but at a distance of several feet. The stranger, also, was to my right a little behind and above us.

At once I began to question him, not having the least fear that he could get away, for I was satisfied that the very act of my formally descending upon and confronting him held him fixed by some law governing evil spirits—at least such is the opinion I formed at that moment, but if not correct then the explanation is beyond my knowledge.

The first question which I asked him was : “ Are you happy in your present existence ? ”

Marian almost instantly conveyed to me his answer, which was to the effect that he was quite content, but with a certain indifference as to whether he was so or not ; in fact, the current of information (not words, for the electric language in vogue in the spiritworld conveys a much more complete answer than any human language,) in which the reply came implied perfect apathy upon this point.

“ In what are you most interested ? ”

The answer showed me that he took no particular interest in anything definite ; he was simply swayed as circumstances influenced him.

“ Where do you take up your abode ? What particular locality do you frequent with your presence ? ”

Here again the answer indicated very humble pretensions. Most of his time he remained where he then was, interested in the doings of other spirits around him or communicating with them ; at other times leisurely examining any bright spirits he might see, but evidently quite indifferent to the wonders around him ;—he was interested in his own very small way !

“ Do you ever visit the earth and tempt mankind to do evil ? ”

Yes ; sometimes for a change he went there, but was generally very glad to return to this particular spot. His answer conveyed the impression that he was altogether too indifferent to be a dangerous tempter.

“ Do many spirits come and converse with you here ? ”

Yes ; at intervals this seemed to be a gathering-place for many evil spirits who regarded this one as a great gossip.

“ Do you frequently see bright spirits ? ”

Yes ; they were occasionally seen by him, but he had no great curiosity to know much about them.

“ Do you ever communicate with them ? ”

No ; he had no reason why he should converse with any, not that he would object if he had ; he was pleased at having us to converse with, and was very willing to do his best to answer my questions.

“Do you know in what sphere you are ? ”

This question was quite beyond him.

“Do you know where heaven is ? ”

He considered that he was in heaven ; but the subject did not interest him much.

“Where, then, do the bright spirits and angels you see come from ? ”

He did not know anything for certain about them ; he frequently admired them, but did not trouble himself about or inquire after them.

“What do you inquire about, then ? ”

He had interests of his own, the exact nature of which I could not find out, but no doubt they were natural to his condition and properties.

“Don’t you sometimes wonder at all the marvels you see around you in this region of wonders ? ”

Oh, yes ! he had had his time of that, but it was past now ; he just liked to remain where he was, and witness the doings of other spirits,—that was his great delight.

“Have you ever seen the Godhead ? ”

No, he had not that he knew of, and was of the opinion that there was no particular God—any angel might be one for anything he knew or cared !

“Who, then, rules this world ? ”

Well ; there was nothing to rule that he knew of !

“Indeed ! but who, for instance, put you here ? ”

Oh ! he came himself easily.

“Yes ; but you were once upon the earth yourself ! ”

Perhaps he was ; that was of no interest to him !

“Who was it that gave you freedom from your body ? ”

Well, he had forgotten that ; indeed, he was not sure that he had ever been in a body !

“But surely you have seen men upon the earth when you go there ? ”

Yes, perhaps he had ; but the subject seemed too deep for him to think about.

“What were you when upon the earth ; try and remember—were you a man or a woman ? ”

The question thoroughly puzzled him ; he knew nothing whatever about it.

“ Now, my friend, of what religion were you ? ”

Again he was lost in ignorance and doubt ; no answer conveying any meaning to my brain.

“ How long have you been here ? ”

All he knew was that he had been there from as far back as his memory would carry him.

“ Then you know nothing about your life upon earth ? ”

He did not know that he had once had a life upon earth—if he had, well, he had, and that was all he could say about it !

“ But now, look here ; you must know something about your past—do not feign ignorance with me ? ”

I could not get any answer from him at all ; he seemed altogether too dense or trifling, but otherwise, from the replies which he had given me, I formed quite a respectable opinion about him.

I put more questions to him to try and draw him further, but beyond a certain limited radius he would not be drawn. I felt that I had not yet mastered the direction in which his interests lay, and that my questions hitherto were in the wrong channel, and consequently of no moment to him. It cannot be otherwise than that evil spirits must have occupations by which to pass their time, or something to interest them, which no doubt are considered of great importance by all ; but it was evident that I had not as yet hit upon the right topic, so I questioned him about his companions, and on such other subjects as I considered would be likely to tap his interests. But no, I was altogether at sea, so was compelled to give this one up as a hopeless case.

Marian considered that I had done well for the first attempt, at the same time admitting that my subject was a distinct type in himself, with very limited ideas and aspirations.

“ Yes, Marian, I see that,” was my reply to this remark, “ but where does his evilness come in ? ”

“ Well, sir ; your examination of him did not disclose the direction in which his evilness lay. However, he is evil, otherwise he would not be here, but his cunning probably made him give you the answers he did purposely to deceive you.”

“ He did not appear to me very dark or shady.”

“ No ; undoubtedly he is one of the better class who inhabit this region far away from the earth—not absolutely an evil spirit with an irresistible, fiendish desire to do evil. He may be one in whom the power of evilness is but slightly developed, but that is sufficient to hold him back. The power of evilness holds spirits in this region—evilness, darkness—the opposing power to faithfulness, light, of which he is devoid.”

The foregoing interview so exhausted my already worn-out spiritual properties that I was unavoidably compelled to bring my researches in the spiritworld to a close for the time being.

The apparent result of my recent investigations may not be great, but that is no gauge to the amount of exhaustion entailed, or to the extent of my knowledge of spiritual matters which I am wholly unable to lay hold of or reduce to written language ; and it is with a sigh of relief that I abandon my spiritual character until my mental properties are thoroughly recuperated, and I am bidden to resume my work.

CHAPTER VII

THEY LOVE THE DARKNESS, FOR THEIR DEEDS ARE EVIL

FIVE long months and more have elapsed since the events recorded in the last chapter took place. Five months of rest to my weary brain, of almost complete respite from spiritual influence, and once again I breathe the air of material freedom !

Perforce I was compelled to bring my late investigations to a close when I did, as my mental powers were completely worn out, at least those nerve-centres brought into active operation when dealing with spirits were exhausted to the last degree.

From past experience I was fully aware that no short rest of a few days would restore them to their wonted vigour, but it had to be rest, complete and undisturbed, for a considerable period of time, before they could recoup themselves to be again equal to the strain once more to be forced upon them.

The last few visits I had made to the spiritworld occasioned me great mental discomfort. The terrible exhaustion associated with evil contact greatly tended to aggravate my condition ; still, I was encouraged to continue until the very last, until the climax had been reached, when it was quite beyond the range of possibility that I should have any further success. Although I was glad to be informed that my work was at an end for the present, yet I was infinitely more pleased when I felt the power which had bound me to my spiritual labours was released. Again I was a man, not a semi-spirit, semi-man ! By day I

was myself, by night, also, I was free to do as I pleased !

To be under spiritual influence is very charming and exhilarating as long as the brain is fresh and capable of discharging its duties, but when it has become exhausted to the extent that it is a severe worrying strain even to think about spiritual affairs, much less to plunge into the very midst of them, then the opposite is the case. The charm has developed into an eagerness to be free from the spell, for when I am engaged in my work with spirits they are ever subjecting me to a state of nervous tension which is very distressing when the brain is exhausted.

My whole system at times is under some electrical control which prevents me from utilising my strength. My ambition is weighted down with the dull realisation that I am under restriction and bonds. A feeling of laziness is ever forcing itself upon me, and when this is pronounced, my mind mechanically reverts to my spiritual occupation, and becomes absorbed in it. All activity is supplanted by the desire to be quiet, alone, and to think of or converse with spirits.

On the other hand, when free from this subjection, the extreme opposite is my condition. My mind seldom dwells upon spiritual matters, for my business seems to have greater attractions for me, and hence draws my attention away from them.

Occasionally, however, even during my moments of freedom, I am slowly overpowered by thoughtfulness upon spiritual topics. I look upon them again from my semi-spiritual, semi-human standpoint ; the charm again is pronounced ; but soon earthly affairs claim the uppermost place in my mind, so that my previous thoughts smoulder out like a fire, and I am left myself again. This double existence sometimes annoys me, and sometimes I am proud of it.

During this last period of rest from spiritual labour my freedom has been more complete than ever I remember it to have been since this work was committed to me.

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Minerva has seldom visited me, and I do not suppose that she has communed with me more than three or four times during the whole five months. Marian, whose mission requires her presence with me always, has, of course, been in attendance most of the time, but for all that we did not converse very frequently, for, in truth, the power to do so seemed to be withheld. Our communications were entirely different from those which we hold when I am under Minerva's restrictions. It was quite useless to try and converse upon spiritual topics, or even upon my doings spiritually ; the subjects discussed had to be of a simple earthly nature, and as Marian had now but little knowledge of such matters, the range of our conversation was necessarily very limited. Certain laws were laid down as hard and fast restrictions upon me, which had a tendency to dull my desire for spiritual intercourse, for do what I would still it was impossible to free myself from the influence of them.

Never once did I make the attempt to personate my spiritual form, for, indeed, I discovered that I did not know where to begin. All outlets were tightly closed, so that there was no starting-point from which to make the essay. Evil and frivolous spirits, also, were more or less excluded—not that I was the least sorry on this account, as it prevented them from annoying me with their respective promptings. I had no fights with evil in the middle of the night, nor yet were the frivolous kind present with their foolish levity and wonderful balderdash. I am even justified in saying that to my knowledge no efforts were made to personate my spiritual friends.

Of course I can only state what I know from a material standpoint, but of what was the nature of the array presented on the other side I am entirely ignorant, for no mention is ever made of such matters. Indeed, the spiritual aspect during this period of rest presented a greater veil of mystery to me than it had ever done in the past, for more reasons than those above stated—reasons which cannot yet be committed to paper.

I am just beginning to realise the fact that the more one knows about spirits the less one really understands of their doings, for one has then just sufficient knowledge to feel satisfied that one is furnished with a basis upon which to form ideas, never accurate, however, from the fact that no laws of man in the least affect spiritual existences.

As time advanced I felt the old desire slowly creeping over me again, waiting as it seemed for my sanction before it took entire possession of me. By degrees I gave way to it, so it increased until I thought about recommencing my spiritual work. I did not fix any particular time, but simply agreed with myself that I would begin soon. Gradually this influence obtained a greater hold over me until I fully realised that I should have to make a start before long ; finally, I determined to commence at once.

The same night that I arrived at this decision Minerva visited me after I had retired to bed, and we discussed the subject.

I was anxious to know why she had not fixed a date and begun forthwith, and not commenced operations by driving in the thin end of the wedge first, then compelling me to decide. It seemed to me that it was Minerva's duty to settle all points of this nature. But to my remarks she replied that I was now capable of continuing the work, that she had sent power to let me know this, that I was a free agent, therefore had to decide the rest, for such was my duty, and now that I had determined to start she had come to make preparations.

I told her that I thought if she had come personally and we had discussed the subject it would have been better than the plan she had adopted.

Minerva could not be convinced of this, however, observing that such was not in keeping with the system spirits followed in such cases.

I maintained that I was an exception to the rule applicable to man in such matters, for I was capable of communicating with her directly.

The reply I received was to the effect that she was a spirit, under spiritual laws and powers, and must abide by them.

The conversation then turned to the subject of my coming work, when Minerva gave me a few particulars concerning it: that I was to begin next night to personate my spiritual form; that she would continue as in the past to be my chief instructor; that Marian was again to be my companion and general communicant; that the stranger, who had never visited me since the cessation of my spiritual labours, would be present to execute his duty as usual; in fact, he was then in attendance upon me, ready and wishful to begin.

Minerva further stated that she would forthwith subject me to the restrictions necessary to enable me to personate my spiritual form.

Somehow I had to force myself into liking the approaching investigations, for I instinctively knew from past experience what I had to undergo, and as yet I had not fallen into the groove of appreciating the charm associated with it.

Minerva assured me that great success would attend my labours, and that I should become still more powerful and gather much valuable information.

Such prospects were all one could wish for, but the magnitude of the whole undertaking, the responsibility, and the recognised fact of my anomalous and negative position in the spiritworld, all tended to make me wish that some one else rather than myself had been entrusted with this work.

As my powers develop once again, and my senses become aroused from their present dormant condition, no doubt the yearning of the past will return with renewed energy and I shall appreciate the charm and privilege of my remarkable occupation.

Past experience has taught me that in several respects I am a personage of changeable properties. I am cognisant of the fact that certain of my impulses, such as will-power and ambition, develop at times to suit existing

circumstances, for I have seen and have been otherwise aware of a change in them, from one extreme to the other, in a very short time, as occasion prompts, especially when under spiritual influence. This sudden change sometimes makes me think that there is a deficiency in my character ; still, after taking all things into consideration, the whole aspect points to the fact that it is due to spiritual influence alone. Personally I am of the opinion that such changes are necessary one way or the other in order to carry out my spiritual researches.

Dabbling in supernatural mysteries, personating conditions totally new to the brain, exploring regions undreamt of by man, dealing with spirits of various types and possessing different degrees of electric power—all these intangible and obscure pursuits, when prosecuted by man, must almost necessarily call for a departure from the normal human standard.

Mankind in the past has not been required to face such advanced and abstruse propositions, hence he is completely ignorant of the requirements necessary in dealing with them. The unseen and inexplicable reasons for these sudden and abnormal changes in myself are attributable to the peculiar duties I am called upon to discharge in my investigations into what is to the human mind, as at present enlightened, an unsubstantial world. None of my normal senses, natural to my material existence, are of any service in this work, hence a supernatural development of these senses, as well as a forced activity into others, hitherto dormant, must necessarily be induced.

Next evening I was prepared to face the situation, but to my surprise I found it impossible to calm down sufficiently before making the attempt to cross the abyss. This is always necessary, and the nearer I attain to the exact standard required the greater is my measure of success. My senses have to be less on the alert than is usual in daily life ; my body must be in an easy and comfortable position, and I instinctively know when I

am just right. Upon this occasion I was compelled to allow myself to indulge in a light, short sleep—then I was ready.

I felt that strange sensation of almost perfect freedom and expectancy come over me, as if the outlet of my brain into the spiritworld stood open wide, and a very refreshing breeze were blowing through it. I remained thus spell-bound—in the very act of leaving my body. On the material side there were few attractions, save the love of home ; all was dull, sodden, and heavy. Thus I stood and gazed with an eager yearning into the eternal world ! The whole vista was cheery, refreshing, inviting ! The very atmosphere, light and bracing, presented a marked contrast to the dense and depressing nature of that on the temporal side. Intuitively I knew that it was only necessary for me to release myself and instantly I should be in my spiritual form. This I did, but so great had the attractive power of my brain become during these five months of rest that all my properties did not transport themselves, and I felt myself slide into two portions, the larger of which went into my spiritual form. My own body was motionless, and I was powerless to do anything with it until my complete return again.

The old feeling then came over me, of almost double existence, with my attention strictly upon my spiritual form. I was now in the position that the latter was by far the more greatly endowed portion, for I could move and communicate in the spiritworld ; still, for all that I was not entirely there, in all my properties, as is usually the case.

I had personated my spiritual condition close to my body, and Marian was beside me when I arrived there, although I could see her but dimly.

“ Well, sir ! ” she began. “ Welcome here again to your work. We are all anxious to resume our duties.” (She bowed to me as she made this communication.)

“ Thanks, Marian ! Yes, I am here again ready for work, but as yet I have not good control over my spiritual

powers. I suppose they are not yet thoroughly awakened to the importance of the position—where is Minerva ? ”

“ Sir ! She is where she arranged that we should meet her. If you are ready let us go ? ”

“ Oh, yes ! I am ready, but not as fit as I should like to be.”

We then made a sudden movement, and in a moment were in front of Minerva. I could not see her as clearly as I had done in the past, but I was thoroughly satisfied that it was she, for I could feel her presence. To her left was another spirit. Marian was now upon my left side, and we were both facing Minerva and her companion. Then I naturally looked around for my friend, “ the stranger,” to see if he were there. Yes, I recognised him sure enough, just the same as ever, standing behind me to my right and slightly above my level.

Minerva then welcomed me and bid me satisfy myself that I was actually where I expected to be. She ordered me to make a visit of inspection all round, and thoroughly to reassure myself.

I went. Yes, I was in space most certainly ! above, below, and on all sides it was just the same—space. I drank in this reassuring evidence ; looked about me for spirits but could not see any at that moment, so returned to the group quite satisfied.

Minerva then began a lengthy communication which I had difficulty in following. She conversed slowly, often repeating herself so as to allow my brain time to receive and grasp what was said, for it was not yet aroused from its long rest.

“ Well, sir ! You see and are satisfied. We are all here again ready to resume our duties. I shall now develop you in a somewhat different direction, slightly change the conditions through which you receive information. You shall be restricted more closely to the capacity of your brain. We will no longer converse upon subjects your brain cannot comprehend. In the past this was necessary, but now it is not so ; indeed, a continuation

of such procedure would take you quite out of your depths ; besides, it is useless to go beyond the point where you can keep in touch with your brain. You shall have success and obtain most fresh information, for the time is drawing near when this must be laid before the public, but before such can be effected this work must reach a certain stage, for from that date begins a new era in this unique undertaking. Your standard properties will greatly develop in your new work, for I have been devoting a considerable portion of my attention to this end while you have been recuperating your exhausted mental powers. First, you had better examine evil spirits further ; you shall question them where and how you please, and Marian as in the past will act as interpreter. Gather such information as you think necessary under the conditions allowed you. You must learn little by little, for that is the only way to obtain information here where time is of no importance. Note carefully all details, otherwise your work will not be completely discharged. Record such events as entail items of importance—and now, sir, here is your new assistant.”

Forthwith I was introduced to the spirit on Minerva's left side. The introduction was essentially spiritual in its nature, and no mention of any name was made. It is beyond my power, as I have previously stated, to give any satisfactory explanation of the spiritual method of greeting, so that I cannot say more than that I was introduced to this spirit.

I was somewhat surprised at the very abrupt way in which the conversation led to an introduction of this kind, although it was quite in keeping with the expedition always exercised when I am present in the spiritworld, and I answered in the best spiritual fashion I could command.

I inferred from what I was told that this new assistant was to help me in some direction at present unknown to me.

Well, I must admit that I have no ground for complaint ! Everything is being done by Minerva to mould my limited power into a pliable condition. Wherever there is a likelihood of some loophole existing there a sentinel is posted, and whenever any new section of my brain has to be developed a developer is immediately forthcoming. But at present I am incapable of defining the duties to be allotted to stranger number two.

After this Minerva directed me to go and see what I could learn. Marian and I started off at once, and it was not long before I was busily examining evil spirits at different levels. It was, I found, absolutely necessary for me to concentrate my entire attention on each spirit, even to examine it casually ; still, my unpractised spiritual powers were not equal to the occasion and I was reluctantly obliged to return to my body. This caused me much annoyance, but it was quite impossible for me to stay any longer.

After a short rest I again set out with Marian, but was far from being my spiritual self ; indeed, no sooner had I resumed my investigations than my whole presence seemed suddenly to disintegrate, and I had no particular existence anywhere. I was lost, emphatically lost, without any clue to my whereabouts. As a matter of fact I was nowhere properly, so I exerted my shattered powers as best I could to concentrate my presence to the spot where it had exploded, as it were, from my spiritual body. The effort was a complete failure, so I gave it up and returned by degrees to my body which was in the act of going to sleep. Immediately after I had resumed my material condition sleep overcame me, but I did not long remain so, for I wakened up with a start, only, however, to find it beyond my power to return to my spiritual personality again that night.

This sudden and peculiar dissolution is the first of its kind I have experienced, hence I am not in a position to explain its cause. This was the first time, also, that on my return I found my body all but asleep, for, as a rule,

it is in exactly the same position as I leave it, except sometimes slightly affected by cramp.

Was this latest and unexpected development due to the new *modus operandi* Minerva had adopted? some interference in a different direction? or was it merely due to the habit my body had acquired of going to sleep almost at once after my getting into bed, instead of lying awake, as is my custom when engaged in spiritual affairs?

Perhaps it had not yet realised that I was away in the spiritworld? Or possibly it may be attributable to the fact that enough of my presence did not enter my spiritual form, hence this extra power retained in my body was just sufficient to allow it to go to sleep? However, I shall endeavour to obtain an explanation from Minerva on my next visit.

The following evening I again crossed the abyss—full of bright anticipations of acquiring something new, or undergoing some interesting experience—but I was disappointed at the very outset, for my spiritual self had not yet reached the standard necessary for success. Minerva maintained that it was the result of my not yet being sufficiently under spiritual control, or, in other words, that I was not yet reduced to that fine condition so essential to harmony. This I could feel myself, that there was too much of the material attribute present, which overpowered the delicate spiritual properties.

All my efforts to calm myself into harmony were unavailing, and only tended to irritate my material self the more. However, I managed to personate my spiritual form near my body and succeeded in holding an interview with my tutors.

Marian welcomed me as usual, then we proceeded to the locality where Minerva awaited us. There I beheld her, grand and imperturbable, ready to receive me!

As soon as the conversation began I found to my sorrow how deficient I was in power, for all communications were hazy and difficult to translate, and my spiritual senses seemed to be in a state of lethargy. How dis-

appointing this was, for it takes an enormous amount of energy and determination to personate the spiritual entity, as well as requires great concentration of faculties to remain in the spiritworld, then to have but indifferent success is indeed annoying.

Notwithstanding the fact that such was my condition, still I determined to use my utmost endeavours to effect a satisfactory visit, so I plunged into a conversation with Minerva, all the while exercising my deepest attention the better to help myself to establish my power.

In the course of general communing I asked Minerva to explain to me the reason for the abrupt termination of my last visit, and was answered to the effect that it was altogether due to my spiritual faculties not yet having recovered their normal supernaturally developed condition. I was further informed that it was unreasonable for me to expect to jump, as it were, from man to spirit, for a regular process of training and education must first be gone through in order to develop and elevate the spiritual portions of my brain and repress the strong power of the earthly ones. This I was assured was quite necessary for the work which I was going to be called upon to perform.

In reply, I remarked that hitherto no such process had ever been gone through to my knowledge.

"Sir," Minerva retorted, "you are steadily advancing, but this advance must be in every direction. At first your visits to this world were of a feeble nature in all respects, but now it is necessary for your presence to be here upon a more comprehensive scale, hence the foundation must be laid upon a firmer basis—the difference is great, and the change you will soon find out is necessary."

"That sounds reasonable, Minerva," I replied. "But if it goes on increasing in this way my brain-power will soon reach its furthest limit in this respect. Its capacity is restricted, of that I am satisfied, and my last experiences were bordering upon that limit."

"Not at all, sir! You do not yet know your own

properties ; they have not been tested, and I shall not attempt to go beyond what they allow—indeed, I cannot.”

“ Quite so, Minerva ! But during my late visits here there were numerous communications which my brain did not receive ? ”

“ True, sir ! You see that is the very reason why I have changed the method of our workings, so as to increase the power employed upon each occasion and to limit you closely to the altered conditions. Our operations will be upon a firm basis, and one which will allow of great development, particularly in the brain’s capacity for receiving information.”

After this we all moved to a different locality, and I advanced a short distance beyond the others, there to glean what information I could. My senses were still far from acute, so that I was barely able to distinguish spirits at all. Such being the case it was useless to continue in this vein, so I bent my attention upon the delights of space. This occupation is always charming in the extreme. Space in all directions ; no mother earth beneath me, and no objects of a material nature visible ; above, no blue sky—all was the same. Space in this region certainly does present an appearance of light, but not light such as man knows it upon earth. There are no shadows, no objects to obstruct or reflect the light, for spirits in no sense affect this light, and conversely this light in no way affects spirits ; the two are completely independent of each other. Such being the case, light in eternal space does not proceed from any one direction, but is general all over.

After regaling myself in this dreamy contemplation to my entire satisfaction I returned to the group, and made another attempt to converse, but my powers forsook me entirely and I was compelled to return to my body. No amount of effort or will-power would transfer them again to my spiritual form, they had returned to stay. I waited for perhaps fifteen minutes, then made another attempt, but was constrained to give it up in despair.

I could certainly personate my spiritual body, but no power was at my disposal; it seemed unapproachable, hence I was helpless both in my spiritual part and body, but when I returned to the latter then I was completely myself again, for instantly all my mental properties reunited into one whole.

These repeated failures only stimulated me to try and remedy the deficiency before my next visit. My spiritual assistants also did what they could to ensure better success in the future, nor were all our efforts in vain, for my next essay was an undoubted success.

In the meantime I had several conversations with my instructors, and, included among them, was an interesting commune with my new help—stranger number two. Naturally my curiosity was aroused by this newcomer's presence, and I was not by any means sorry to have the privilege of an instructive interview with her.

She was a most charming conversationalist, endowed with strong force of character and common sense. Her knowledge was of a high order, and her general bearing left a strong impression upon my mind. In action and manners she resembled Marian, and I discovered that she was from the same sphere—the third. Her power, though great, was of quite a different degree from that possessed by Minerva. For her position and work she was adequately equipped in this respect, but then both in position and work she was much inferior to Minerva, consequently, all her spiritual forces were of a lower order. At the same time there was a distinct impression left, after conversation with her, that she was a powerful spirit, more so, perhaps, than Marian. But how difficult it is to draw a comparison between spirits of power and man! It is almost impossible to define wherein the great difference lies, but the whole spirit is advanced in all respects, and the only comparison I can make is to say that Minerva was just as far advanced beyond my new acquaintance as she was advanced beyond man.

One of my first endeavours was to try and ascertain

this stranger's name, and the answer I received was a current, not definitely conveying to me any particular name, but the name "Louisa" was vaguely presented, although at the same time the current distinctly implied that it did not particularly matter, for all names were alike. This being the most I could learn about her condition in the past, I shall call her "Louisa," in any future reference I may make to her.

When next I presented myself in spiritual form, fully equipped with all necessary properties, Marian and Louisa were present to welcome me, for their duties are directly in connection with myself, both spiritually and on earth, whilst dabbling in spiritual affairs.

My spiritual machinery is delicate in structure, complicated beyond recognition even by myself, and to keep this connecting link between man and spirit in proper working order requires skilful handling, hence all interested in the successful discharge of this undertaking have important duties to perform.

Without the assistance of Minerva and Marian I should be absolutely useless, and now no doubt Louisa's services are essentially necessary. The same applies to the stranger; and, on the other hand, if I were not there all these advanced and advancing spirits could not do their work—but to return to the subject in hand.

After I had paid my respects to these two spirits we discussed the probability of a successful visit. Individually my impressions were distinctly favourable, so also was the analysis my friends made of my spiritual self. This was clearly satisfactory, for I had done my utmost to bring such a condition about.

Forthwith we repaired to Minerva, and found her in her usual attitude. We considered what work it would be best for me now to begin; and as far as I was concerned my desire was to continue the examination of evil spirits in their abode, but I was not perfectly satisfied that my powers were yet capable of withstanding the strain. Minerva no doubt recognised my hinted thoughts, and

suggested that I should first make a general tour of the locality by myself, in order to revivify my spiritual properties. This I willingly did, and started off without delay.

First, space almost naturally held me spell-bound for a short time, then I bent my attention upon spirits themselves, solely to find out whether I could distinguish them sufficiently well to enable me to choose one for my curious questioning. I could now see them without any doubt—dark objects, nearly always moving away when I approached within a reasonable distance of them. Possibly they may have had some suspicion of what my intentions were, either from my anomalous appearance or from their ability to read my thoughts ; or, on the other hand, my spiritual self might have had an aversion to them and so repelled them, but I am inclined to the former theory, for I felt no sensation of antipathy whatever.

I then returned to my companions and found them occupying exactly the same positions as I had left them in, all on a parallel above where I mechanically came to a full stop. Minerva was by herself in her customary thoughtful attitude. Marian and Louisa were on Minerva's right side, separated by a short distance. Behind and slightly above was my spirit bodyguard, ready for action.

The above is how they appeared as I lingered and looked at the beautiful spectacle, and I thought that a sight so wondrous as that I now gazed upon man never could behold, hence could not clearly grasp. The entire group were bright spirits, easily distinguishable in this shady atmosphere—far different from the dark outcasts I had just been inspecting.

I returned to my position eager to begin operations upon some unsuspecting subject. Soon we were ready, and left Minerva's presence. We descended to my right side in a slanting direction, and at once found ourselves in the haunts of evil spirits.

As before we perceived that they were difficult to approach, from the habit they had of constantly moving away as we advanced, hence I could not secure any. I looked and looked again for a likely subject, but could not decide until Marian came up to my side and helped me to choose one.

We were slowly wending our way onwards when suddenly Marian prompted me—"There!" Instantly I had him fast under my power, unable to get away. Just as Marian prompted me I saw him, and immediately used my power to hold him prisoner. I had him secure, and no doubt I wore an air of satisfaction, for I felt well pleased with myself.

"Well, Marian! What kind of a subject does he appear to you—evil?"

"Yes, sir! An average type of this locality."

"He can't get away, can he?"

"No; your power is sufficient to hold him for our purpose."

I now looked around and beheld a remarkable picture; a study in spiritual ways, in spiritual powers and currents, and one well worthy of description, although probably to man the reality can never be depicted. Picture myself and my prisoner the principal actors in the scene, myself the centre. The captive was in front of me on a lower level (in order to give an adequate idea of our positions, and the distances we were apart, I am compelled to employ vulgar earthly terms, however much out of place they may be in their application to spiritual conditions), about twenty-five to thirty feet before and slightly below me. To my left, a little to my side of half way between us, was Marian. To my right and behind, at a rough estimate of thirty feet, awaited Louisa. Further behind upon a still higher level stood the solitary stranger. No other spirits were present, all having probably been driven away to prevent my being affected by the influence of evil.

The positions which we severally occupied were quite

natural to me at the time. Such an arrangement, no doubt, was necessary, having due regard to obtaining the best results from the different electric currents ; the whole being specially planned for my benefit and assistance.

My captive was an extremely miserable-looking being compared with my escort, nevertheless, he had an important position to fill during the coming examination. I was well aware that he was watching me intently, fully alive to the fact that I was about to question him. He had a sly appearance, as if eager to know who I was and why I wanted to examine him. Somehow I felt no pity for him although he was under my power ; and in return for the difficulty I had experienced in obtaining him as a typical sample of a certain type of evil existence I was now going to see what information I could elicit from him.

At the outset the difficulty that confronted me was that I scarcely knew how to begin the conversation with such a spirit, so probably I hesitated longer than was necessary. However, it was clearly my duty to open the interview, so I collected my thoughts, and broke the ice by politely inquiring if he were happy in this his abode.

There was no answer, so I concentrated my entire attention upon him to try and press him to reply. As he stood before me, and I had ample opportunity to examine him carefully, he resembled an average-sized man, enveloped in darkness, with a subdued light behind him, for such is the aspect of space in this region. The actual outlines of his true figure were almost invisible from the darkness of evil power which surrounded him. This darkness radiated beyond his real outline, then gradually faded away, and finally lost itself in boundless space.

At last an answer came, spluttering in form, and conveying nothing at all definite. It translated, as best I can interpret it, into an assertion implying doubt as to whether he was happy, even doubt as to whether he knew the meaning of this simple question. Upon the whole, the tenor of the reply contained a note of uncertainty

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whether he would answer questions concerning his private life. At any rate, I gleaned that he was not deficient in cunning, so I endeavoured to draw him out by degrees.

Here, again, I was confronted with the difficulty of not knowing in which direction to aim my questions, for he might not have any prominent evil quality.

"That's right, my friend! You look as if you knew what you were about. I suppose you traverse this region considerably?"

"Yes. I frequently take a look around."

"Then you also sometimes visit the earth—don't you?"

"Yes; but where do you come from, sir?"

"I come from the earth seeking information for man; he is anxious to know how you, here, like your world?"

"Plenty of fun here, tell them all to come?"

"Very well; I shall deliver your message, but how long have you been here?"

"Oh! I have just come lately."

"Then you must remember old mother 'Earth'?"

"I have a faint recollection about it!"

"Were you a Christian when upon earth?"

"Certainly!"

"Then, since coming here have you beheld the God-head?"

"Yes! Oh, yes! I have seen that."

"What was He like in appearance?"

"Very big and powerful!"

"What did He say to you?"

"Well; I have not conversed with Him."

"Why not? You are surely able if any spirit is?"

"No need. I am not depending upon any one!"

"Now from what nation, or from what country did you come?"

Here his memory was at fault, for he scarcely understood the meaning of the question.

"What was your occupation when upon earth? You see, my friend, I want to know something about you."

"I remember, but do not know exactly how to describe it."

"Were you a man when upon the earth, can you recollect?"

"No doubt I was." (The spiritual interpretation of this answer conveyed a much deeper meaning than his utterance gave expression to; it intimated that he was very indifferent as to what he had really been when on earth.)

"Of course you had a number of friends on earth?"

"Yes."

"Numbers here too?"

"Yes." (He was much more taken by his companions in the spiritworld than with those on earth.)

"You no doubt visit your earthly companions?"

"Yes; but it is quite useless to do so." (He was thoroughly disgusted with them; they refused to listen to him, so he was going to leave them alone in the future.)

"How do you amuse yourself when you visit the earth?—tempt man to do evil?"

"Yes; teach him proper things." (Here his evilness came right to the front in one wave of eagerness and thirst for sin; at last I had found his strong point, or his loophole for inquiry.)

"How do you tempt man? do you find it interesting work?"

"Yes! Certainly! just pounce upon him." (The answer conveyed a very deep meaning indeed, and from it I pictured him keenly watching an opportunity in his victim, and when it came then jumping upon him, and doing his utmost to relieve that pent-up anxiety to commit sin, and clinging to his prey until he was forced away. There was real vice in this fiend—an insatiable yearning and thirst after evil.)

"Indeed! then you always enjoy yourself there?"

"Yes! Always!"

"Now, when you tempt man in what line of action do you consider you have the most success?"

His answer was to the effect that prompting man to swear and use vile language were his ideals of true enjoyment. This seemed really to be his one object when visiting the earth and tempting man.

"I suppose you have certain subjects upon the earth to whom you return each time you visit it?"

"Oh, no! any one! chance good luck is my fancy."

"Do you frequently succeed in your efforts? Tell me because I want to know exactly; remember we are friends!"

The answer clearly showed that he, as a matter of fact, very rarely got a chance of prompting evil, for there were too many bent upon the same business as himself—numbers much more powerful than he was—so that up to the present he had not had very good luck, but would like me to give him a few hints. His depravity at this point became very pronounced.

"Now, my friend, so much for the earthly side of your life, but how do you find your best amusement in this world?"

"Oh! That is not difficult." (Still, I could not learn exactly in which way; it appeared to be generally with other spirits—evil doings of a kind natural to their condition, probably unknown to man. But the earth seemed to be the hot-bed for his evil desires. Poor man! so innocent, so blind, so ignorant of the real nature of evil, that the very knowledge of such ignorance existing affords the prompter infinitely greater delight than doing evil in the spiritworld where it is like against like.)

"Now, suppose, my friend, that I were upon the earth, would you tempt me to do evil?"

"Yes! Certainly! Anybody! no distinction whatever, so long as it affords gratification."

"Doubtless you have seen the Devil himself?"

"Eh!" (He had never thought about a devil, appeared just to awaken to the fact that there might be one.)

"Not seen him? Then possibly you have that pleasure still awaiting you?"

Here he was lost in amazement, doubt, and perhaps hope.

"I suppose you have much to do and think about here?"

"Yes. There is always that to fall back upon in dull times, but it has not much fascination for me."

"Who looks after you here, overrules you, keeps law?"

"Oh! Well! Things seem to get on all right by themselves. I do not see any necessity for a ruler, but possibly there may be one." (Such things did not interest him in the least. What he was really lustful after was to sin; that was all I could gather from him, and his knowledge in every other respect seemed to be obliterated by this yearning.)

"What kind of a being do you call yourself?"

"Oh! an angel!" (Astonished at my ignorance.)

"What would you call me then?"

"Well! That I cannot exactly tell." (Implying that possibly I might pass for one, but that there was something about me not quite right.)

Here I pointed to Marian, and said: "Now, my friend, what would you call this being?"

That, he imagined, was an existence almost beyond his comprehension, but supposed that it was an angel older than himself.

"You expect, then, to attain to a condition equal to this one?"

At this point I was interrupted by Marian, who suggested that the examination had gone far enough, and that I had extracted from him all he knew. Forthwith, I looked at my captive, slowly reduced his bonds, then set him completely at liberty. Like a flash he vanished, glad no doubt to escape me.

I thought to myself the wonderfulness of it all; to live in such a marvellous region yet to be oblivious to

everything save such craving after sin and evil ; and how his cunning allowed him the knowledge that he was free so that he might immediately return to his ways.

I turned to Marian, and remarked : " That evil one is deeper than he appears upon the surface ? "

" Yes, sir ! His evilness prevents his knowledge from increasing, for true knowledge is part of God's property, but the knowledge of this evil spirit is knowledge of evil and cunning—attributes of the power of darkness. But, sir, do you not consider that your questions were drifting in an improper direction ? "

" Yes, Marian, perhaps they were, but I was very desirous of finding out what his ideas really were upon as many topics as possible. I had just commenced to examine him upon a subject of great interest to man when you stopped me, but you know best where to draw the line. My anxiety to learn all I could from him possibly led me astray, but I sincerely hope it did not occasion you any offence."

" Certainly not, sir ! You were satisfied with your examination, were you not ? "

" Completely ! I have not experienced such good luck as this before ; merciless soul, environed by an inexhaustible thirst after sin and depravity ! "

" Yes, sir. His ambition leant towards evil instead of good ; his faithlessness, also, no doubt, has left its mark. You must see that there is no hope whatever of his ultimately entering heaven ; indeed, his tendency is in the opposite direction."

" Yes. He is a typical evil spirit, and, somehow, I do not feel in the least sorry for him."

" No help for such an one is possible. It is only in accordance with instinct that he should be as he is. Eternal properties cannot be changed. But now, sir, you had better return to your body, there to rest yourself for a while, and then we shall interview another spirit this evening, if you are willing."

" Yes, certainly, Marian. I am more than willing.

From the success of this last attempt I know that I am in excellent form to examine another."

We started back on our homeward journey, not that it necessarily required much time to accomplish it ; but we proceeded slowly, rejoicing at our good fortune.

In all my previous spiritual experience I never felt so exhilarated as I did on that short return journey, and both Marian and Louisa were, in their refined and beautiful way, shouting glory to our success.

I was glad of a brief respite to relieve the tension upon my physical powers. During this interval we discussed the subject of my forthcoming interview, and decided that Louisa should recollect the events above stated completely herself, and that Marian should remember the particulars of the approaching interview. This arrangement would prevent any confusion in my brain of both communications, for each of my companions would know her own particular work, and do it better than I could ; thus in recording they would revivify in my mind the correct observations, so that now I have not the least difficulty in recollecting the exact occurrences.

Minerva visited me for a few moments, and congratulated me upon my successful expedition, stating that I should have another such experience, then she vanished.

I waited some minutes in order to restore my brain, in the meantime carefully going over what I had been told by my late unfortunate captive. He was an extremely interesting character, for his insatiable appetite revealed very much more to me than his answers alone conveyed. I had drawn from him practically all he could tell, then released him never to meet again ; both of us in a sense glad when we saw the last of each other. Possibly even now he has forgotten all about the interview in his inordinate anxiety after evil, or he may, perhaps, enlarge upon the occurrence, and ultimately persuade himself that he has actually met the evil one face to face.

Soon we set out again in the usual order, and almost

immediately were in Minerva's presence, who was evidently awaiting our arrival.

She began : " Now, sir. You have had a successful interview with an evil spirit of the average type. On this occasion you must question one of an entirely different class. The operation will entail more exhaustion upon you, but the result will be satisfactory. Now, if you are ready, we will begin ? "

Of course I was both ready and anxious ; my companions, also, were in like mood, so I was in the act of starting out when Minerva retained me with the remark, " There is your subject waiting ! "

I glanced in the direction which she indicated, and sure enough beheld a terribly degraded specimen of evil existence, powerless to move. I was amazed until I realised that Minerva had herself captured and was now holding him for me to question.

I asked if such were the case, and received an answer in the affirmative, as if capturing such a fiend were not of much moment to Minerva.

I advanced towards him, and gazed literally in horror at his abject appearance. The impression imparted to me was that he was a fiend of the very worst type in hell. His form was short, narrow, and contracted. The blackness of intense evil power completely enveloped him, and his entire appearance corroborated the feeling I entertained of him.

I now fully appreciated why Minerva herself had chosen this spirit for me to question. He was evidently a pronounced individuality even amongst his own very strongly marked class ; a leader of the most degraded form of vice, for my attention was drawn to a number of his followers, grimly crowded together in a mass, some distance away to my right, not daring to approach nearer, nor yet willing to lose sight of their captain. This information was conveyed to me in one current from Marian, who no doubt had received it from Minerva.

I immediately realised that I stood face to face with

probably one of the lowest yet most powerful fiends in hell, and recognised that the position might be one not entirely devoid of danger to myself in more ways than one. Then I looked around to see if Minerva were there, and beheld her powerful presence making one of the circle—evidently in attendance for a purpose—stationed to my left, a short distance behind. The others of us occupied exactly the same positions as on the previous occasion that evening.

I faced my subject again, and collected all my powers well together ready to begin :

“Now, sir, I simply desire to ask you some questions for my own information, and I trust you will do your best to satisfy me in this respect ?”

Forthwith, his ardent and inalienable evilness seemed to hurl itself upon me, and the answer came :

“No. Not if I can help, who are you who dare to question me ?”

“Sir, I am from the earth seeking information for man, you won’t refuse my request ?”

“Man ! Poor man, you kill man then ?” (Here his inherent degradation was beyond description. His whole attention burst upon me with all its terrible evil power, when instantly it flashed through my mind that he might possibly find me out on earth, and torment me for this audacious interference with his liberty.)

“Sir,” interposed Marian with power and dignity, evidently aware of what my thoughts were, “his intense anxiety after evil prevents him from doing any harm.”

That answer satisfied me, and I resumed the examination.

“No, stranger, I have no desire to kill man—why should I ? I am seeking information for him concerning you inhabitants of this world !”

“Oh, then you don’t kill ?” (Disappointment was pronounced.)

“No, sir, neither do you kill man—you cannot !”

“Cannot ! Me ! I will kill every man on earth !”

"You cannot, sir! Laws prevent you! Powers prevent you! God prevents you!"

"Prevent me? Who? Nothing can stop me! Look! my followers! they kill man! Nothing says 'No.' I say 'Yes.' Then we kill!" (The sight of this wretched fiend was awful to witness. There was no shame about him at all, but a persistent yearning to kill. He was literally doubled in two with the longing to be at me, but he was fast bound by spiritual bonds for examination. Such an examination as man never witnessed; indeed, should have no desire to witness. The effort required to cope with his evil power I felt was exhausting me rapidly, but I kept on questioning him.)

"Look! Stranger! When you kill, as you say you do, what benefit do you derive from it?"

"Kill! See the fun! Ah! the fun! the soul lost! fun! lost soul! We torment him then! Aye, the fun! You should kill for the fun? Kill! we will kill all men on earth. All! every one! none to live, ah!" (This answer came in spasmodic utterances, smothered between by his intense eagerness.)

"No, sir, you cannot! Now what advantage will it be to you when all are dead? What will you do?"

"Get into their bodies and kill each other!"

"Well, but that would soon be over, then what would happen when all are dead?"

"My followers, myself, will go on earth! Some must be there, so we will!"

"What then?"

"We will make men, then kill them!"

"Tut, sir! You never killed any man?"

Here he was amazed beyond measure at my audacious assertion, and replied:

"Kill! Yes, I have seen numbers killed—killed! then they go away, I follow and torment! My followers torment! lots of fun to kill! Blood first! then kill!"

"Would you take me into your gang of murderous followers?"

"No! You say you do not kill man! None of my followers will not kill man!"

"Well, you have an interesting occupation, without a doubt, but it leads to no satisfactory end?"

"No end? Yes! when I kill all I am king! My followers will then be kings! Myself the greatest king!"

"You cannot kill then, so what is the use of killing now?"

Killing, or to see killed, was his sole appetite. Merciless wretch! Evil! Essence of evilness! It was useless to converse with him any longer. It was unbearable the thought of his ignorance. His very evil intentions seemed to absorb his whole existence into their power. I looked round to Minerva for advice, lost in the wilderness of blood and depravity presented to me by this captive, disgusted, and anxious to free myself from such a contaminating presence.

I was forthwith instructed to loosen his bonds. But, before doing so I pulled myself together to watch him, not knowing what he might attempt when free. Then I turned round to assure myself that all my companions were ready; this done, I instantly snapped asunder his bonds.

Now he was free to do as he pleased, but to my great surprise he moved away very slowly, until he again joined his companions. Immediately they all grouped around him, several hundreds in number, into a compact ball, no doubt anxious to hear his story. Then they spread out like an army and surrounded us, slowly but surely contracting the circle.

My whole attention was now occupied trying to distinguish the whereabouts of my late prisoner, but they all appeared alike at such a distance.

Bright, powerful, motionless, watchful, our party remained, encircled by an impenetrable barrier of magnetic power.

On they came, gradually and cautiously, until the stranger spirit, stolid and imperturbable, was all but in

contact with their compact advancing line. Suddenly they were brought to a standstill. None inside the circle moved a single hair-breadth from start to finish. All remained waiting, beholding the eternal enemies of everything that is good :—" they love the darkness, for their deeds are evil ! "

Thoroughly exhausted I turned to Marian. We then both approached Minerva and held a short conversation with her. Suddenly she vanished, accompanied by the stranger, and instantly followed by a number of the evil fiends.

The sight of this reminded me of the certainty that the crowd of murderous devils surrounding us, within fifty feet, were watching me closely, with what intent I perfectly well knew ; but how we were going to escape them was more than I could explain. I certainly had no desire to lead or even invite them to my body. In the spirit-world it was all right, for here I was safe from their intrusion, but on earth—their veritable hunting-ground—it was a different matter altogether, and I was not anxious to encounter them in my corporeal form.

" Have no fear, sir ! We shall soon lose them ; now let us go ! " Marian immediately exclaimed in confident accents, evidently well knowing what my thoughts were.

I was prepared ; suddenly we executed three rapid, zigzag movements in space ; rapid in the eternal sense, and how far we went at each flight it is impossible to determine. We stopped, and our pursuers were lost in space.

" Magnificent, Marian ! " I exclaimed with astonishment and satisfaction. " It was neatly done. A sure and quick release from a tight corner : if man could only escape them as easily it would be a great blessing to him."

" Sir ! Man will appreciate it all the more when he arrives here, although he will then have passed beyond the stage of temptation."

We returned to my body, which I was glad to enter, for I was utterly exhausted.

I meditated for long upon this poor, miserable, evil spirit, who knew no ambition other than that of influencing some soul, evil by preference, to take his own life, then to await his arrival in the spiritworld, only to gloat over his forlorn condition. A cold reception, indeed, for a kindred spirit! Faithful and good souls are not thus treated! Undoubtedly it would be a kindness, were it possible, to annihilate such degraded existences, for eternal conditions cannot be changed, they are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

It is almost impossible to imagine that happiness can accrue from such a heinous pastime, still such was his sole enjoyment and occupation. What will be the future of eternity of such a soul when his own eternal power and knowledge are restored to him man cannot even remotely conjecture. No doubt it was especially to weed out such types as these that all souls were called upon by Eternal Justice to undergo the earthly test. Such a riddance from an eternal abode must indeed be a comfort to all good souls for all unending futurity.

CHAPTER VIII

**"CAST HIM INTO OUTER DARKNESS ; THERE SHALL BE
WEeping AND GNASHING OF TEETH "**

It was the next night that I again betook myself to the region of eternal space. I felt that my spiritual faculties were now in splendid condition, and equal to the task which I knew awaited them.

As usual I first awoke in the spiritworld in the vicinity of my body, and as usual I was welcomed by Marian and Louisa. We then forthwith repaired to Minerva's presence, where in all her power and dignity she was expecting our arrival.

Our greetings over, I glanced around as my habit is and to Minerva's right, on a slightly lower level, there I beheld the stranger, in an attitude of distinct obedience, guarding several spiritual forms, who were behind him on a still lower level.

There are laws in this region which demand that spirits of lower rank shall honour those of higher degree by assuming a position of respect towards them. Thus when a spirit of exalted attainment approaches one of inferior standing, particularly when on duty, the latter bows and takes up a position on a slightly lower level, so that he is required to look up to his superior. This law operates naturally to the spiritual form.

Again, when several spirits are performing work common to all, they mechanically fall into their respective positions, except when their duties require them to do otherwise. This difference in level is not much, say perhaps a few inches or more according to the rela-

tive standing of each spirit—just sufficient to mark respect.

Further, it must not for a moment be supposed that spirits are huddled up together like mankind frequently is. I am of course referring to bright, working spirits especially, not to those confined in this sphere, for certainly at times these latter do collect in masses, though how they do not become subject to each other's power I cannot explain. Take, for instance, our little circle of bright spirits ; we seldom are close to each other in the human sense, especially when conversing. On this occasion Minerva was about fifteen to twenty feet in front of me, upon a slightly elevated plane. The stranger was, as I have just stated, alone on a lower level than Minerva—about, say, one hundred feet to her right side. He was in an attitude of dignity, respect, order, and lawfulness. Behind him, upon a still lower plane, at a distance of about twenty feet, were several spirits of low degree, a few feet apart from each other.

To give the reader a definite idea of the picture as I actually saw it when my form suddenly developed in front of Minerva it is necessary to present it to him in a way as near as possible approaching the material condition, nevertheless I most assuredly state that figures are quite out of keeping—too earthly to associate with spiritual existences ; even to me they sound altogether out of place.

Space is illimitable ; plenty of room for all, so that there is no necessity for spirits to crowd together ; besides, there are reasons as well for remaining at such distances apart.

When I stand, say, at Minerva's side, I am under her power most completely, but I cannot enter the circle of this power unless allowed to do so by Minerva, for such is the radius of her own power. To converse upon subjects, therefore, which deal with new information, one must necessarily be quite clear from the other's power, not that my power would affect Minerva in the

least, but, she being advanced beyond me and altogether of a higher order, it would thus be out of reason for me to be within the circle of her power. This law applies universally throughout the spiritworld.

Spirits travel in any direction they choose, therefore are seen at all levels, hence a gathering of spirits presents an appearance which at first sight seems smaller in number than it really is. But to my knowledge spirits conversing with each other are always practically upon the same level, being subject, of course, to the laws above mentioned. Thus, when I was examining my two last subjects I noticed that, although our entire group was practically upon the same level, and our forms perpendicular, still the gathering seemed to be in a slanting direction, due to the relative and exact locations which the several members of it occupied.

But to return to the consideration of our positions : Marian was on my left side, about eight feet distant, and the nearest to myself of any spirit present. Louisa was behind me, on the other side, about twenty feet apart.

One of my first acts after arrival upon the scene was to glance at these strange spirits with the intention of counting them, but, somehow, I could not do so, although I at once knew the reason why they were there. Then I awaited Minerva's bidding.

"Well, sir," she began, "you are, I see, fully prepared to continue your work of further investigating the general conditions of the several classes of evil spirits. You have already had presented to you a fair selection of examples of the ordinary types ; there are others, however, about whom you have been already informed, who are temporarily bound in this region for breaking Divine laws when on earth. The last one you examined was a type of the very lowest degree, of which there are very many in this region ; and I selected him for your especial benefit, in order that you might form some idea of the depth to which evil extends around your world.

It is, perhaps, useless to question more of this type of evil spirits, for the difference between them all is only one of degree, the knowledge of each class diminishing as the evil properties become more pronounced. It is beyond your duty to go further into this subject ; a superficial insight is all that is required in this investigation. Man must be awakened by degrees to facts ; it is too much to expect that he will understand or realise them all at once. I have here a few examples of a different order entirely—*types which man most needs to have brought under his observation !* There are untold numbers of such in this sphere ; some are to be pitied, others not in the least. It is your duty to question them, but there is no necessity to enter into the subject deeply—simply ask each one his history. Now, sir, you see them ; go to them, and examine the form of each one, carefully noting the differences between them.”

I went to within about twelve feet of them ; they were three in number. The first one at whom I looked was a figure, small, narrow, anxious, and above all there was an aspect of sorrowfulness about it. The complete form was different from that of an evil spirit, for it was bright but of a dull brightness. The head, or shall I say the top of the form, was crowned with a cloud of darkness, which extended downwards a little distance and occluded the outline of that part. At once I recognised it as a faithful spirit branded with hell’s brand for some cause yet to be disclosed. Somehow, I instinctively felt sorry for this soul, for there was an aspect of grief and melancholy about it.

I then passed on to the second one. The impression I received from an examination of it was that it was just such another form as the previous one, but the darkness was more pronounced, covering about one third of it. This spirit was branded more severely, for no doubt his crimes were greater.

Next, I proceeded to the third form, and on examination found it to be a different condition entirely. The

form was intensely dark, similar in this respect to an evil spirit, being crowned with only a small halo of light, very insignificant compared with the general darkness of the form. I was struck with the singular appearance it presented, and wondered what his crimes were. Having now satisfied myself of the distinct properties of each of these three spirits, I returned to Minerva and reported my impressions.

"You shall now examine them for yourself," she remarked, and at once withdrew behind me some little distance. The stranger then advanced, leading one of the spirits I had just inspected, and stopped several feet in front of me. He now faced me, and assumed his usual respectful attitude. I was just at a loss to know exactly what to do, as for some reason I was unable to converse with my captive whilst the stranger was in his present position. At last I realised that it was my duty to take the captive under my own power ; this I did quite simply, then the stranger immediately repaired to his other prisoners and resumed his sentinel position. This done, Marian came forward almost mechanically to her old station to act as interpreter. These several movements were executed in perfect harmony, and without any instructions whatever—indeed, performed as if by intuition.

I candidly admit that I am still a stranger in this world, and have not yet mastered the ways of spirits. Each movement they execute is so graceful and impressive, but when my turn comes to perform the same thing I feel awkward, and almost at a loss to know how to proceed.

The spirit that was now in front of me was the third one whom I had inspected—the evil-looking one with the halo of brightness above his head, which I interpreted as being "the power of faith."

There was not much difficulty in opening communications with this spirit ; in truth, he was extremely anxious to tell his tale of woe. His story was not a

long one, but it was pithy, and full of advice and warning to the self-styled minister of God, or as some like to consider themselves—God's specially anointed servants.

He stated that when upon earth he had occupied an important position in a particular religious circle. He knew for a certainty that he did possess the power of faith, but had cared little about discharging his self-imposed duties honestly. Worldly pleasures had been too much in the balance against his life's profession. Finally, he had drifted into neglecting it altogether—in fact, became a hypocrite. He knew perfectly well that he was doing wrong in disregarding his important office, yet he had not the moral courage to draw up and make amends before it was too late. He stated that he had never committed any really great sin; no stain of such was now upon his soul, but his great crime had been that of a *religious hypocrite*. He was now bound in hell until he had atoned for his serious misdeeds when upon earth.

"Oh, sir," he went on to say, "if I could only be tried again I would be spotless, even suppose I never had one single moment's pleasure. Here I am tormented by awful fiends, infinitely worse than anything man can imagine. No peace, no happiness, all agony and distress! Still, I know that I deserve it when I realise what I have done, but it is now too late to repair the past. Let my case be a warning to man in my station of life! Oh, sir, explain to him the folly of neglecting one's duty for a few miserable earthly pleasures,—they are not pleasures, they are inlets to hell!"

He had not been in this region long, therefore ages of durance vile still awaited him before he could become capable of advancing.

The picture this miserable spirit drew me of his life upon earth, and his subsequent troubles, was truly a lamentable one, but the exact extent of his backslidings it is impossible to get at, for most certainly he did not tell me the full measure of his shortcomings.

I pictured him professing to be a teacher of the Christian religion, ostensibly a servant of God, probably a high ecclesiastical dignitary, yet caring for nothing save the emolument he received for his false work. He sinned no doubt often and deeply, and at the same time presented to his fellow workers, and to the public generally, a front of sincere religious conviction and earnest devotion to the exalted mission he was entirely neglecting. His failures in duty most certainly must have been heinous, for his whole form was evil in appearance. Without doubt he possessed some power of faith, and this was his only redeeming property, otherwise he could not have come under this classification. This power of faith was sufficient to make him realise his great mistake in life, which of itself was enough to cause intense agony, for now he had time to reflect upon what his lot might have been had he but honestly discharged his duty.

He was now reaping what he had sown in the flesh, for the justice of God is necessarily severe, and knows no partiality. He knew what was his duty, as well as what was required of him; he also possessed the necessary power to enable him to discharge them efficiently, but he neglected his calling entirely, although of his own free will he had undertaken the responsibility.

There was no pity for him. What untold harm had he not done to poor doubting, wavering man, who naturally looks up to such as he for example as well as precept!

I realised all this, and exercised my power to its very utmost to hurl him from my presence, back again into his well-merited punishment.

Very soon the second one was presented to me in the same manner as the previous one, and deposited in exactly the same place. I secured him just as I had done the last spirit, then the stranger retired to guard his one prisoner.

The spirit now before me was the one that was bright, with the most pronounced darkness covering the upper third of the figure.

“Well, my friend,” I began, “I want you to tell me your history, truly, to the best of your ability. I may state that I am here to report to man a few such cases as your own. Now do you know how long you have been in this region?”

He knew all his story well, for part of his punishment was that it revolved in his mind unceasingly, over and over again, mechanically as it were, and so unbearable had the repetition become that he was anxious beyond measure to escape from it.

He gave me the year, 1895, as the date of his crime. He was influenced to commit a theft, and stole a large sum of money. He was caught, and so enraged did he become that he murdered his captor. This was found out by his family, and he was disgraced where previously he had been respected and honoured. He fled to a foreign land, but could not escape the thoughts of his past evil deeds. As time rolled on he became more and more depressed and miserable, until the agony of his position became intolerable, so he took his own life. He found out, however, that although he had evaded the laws of man he could not escape the unerring justice of God; and now he was relegated to a region amongst a multitude of devils, a victim to despair, wandering aimlessly about, racked by the persistent remembrance of what he had done, and ever yearning to clear his soul from the stain.

Such a case as this can be pitied almost as much as blamed, for are we not all tempted by evil spirits, and who knows but that this disconsolate soul was hard held in the first place when he stole the money? His second crime, committed no doubt as it was in despair and anger, is not to be compared with a cold-blooded murder. And, again, his suicide was but a natural termination to such a plight as he was then in. He was no better off afterwards. Suicide had not ended his troubles; indeed, his position was infinitely worse, for he had committed a third crime, and had hurled himself into the law of

God which shows no mercy. He was judged by circumstances and punished accordingly.

This is a graphic example of what trespass against the moral law will finally end in ; still, his punishment was not half so severe as that meted out to our earlier acquaintance, the religious hypocrite. This murderer had been under bonds and tribulation less time and was much nearer the end of his punishment, for two-thirds of his entire figure was of a brightness equal to that of advancing spirits which clearly demonstrated the fact that he had led a good life otherwise. He was faithful and appreciated what he had done ; now he was ashamed of it, and intensely sorry for his misdeeds.

I pitied him, and answered him to that effect, then set him at liberty. He moved away a short distance, then stopped and bowed to me, evidently having found relief in telling his distressing story.

There was still another spirit awaiting examination ; what class did he belong to I wondered ? What fresh lamentable tale should I hear from this one ?

There was a short respite before the third subject was brought in front of me, during which time we conversed, for no doubt this interval had been purposely arranged in order to give my spiritual powers a short rest before resuming this very exhausting examination.

“Minerva,” I began, “do you not think that last case was one to be pitied ? ”

“Sir,” she replied, “remember that you are now in a world of justice. That last case is as all cases are, for here the punishment is measured out after all the causes have been taken into consideration. An Impartial Justice metes out the punishment to all, so then the punishment each one receives is his due for his sins committed during the test. I do not deny that he is to be pitied for his mistakes, perhaps trifling at first, but how are we capable of judging him when we have no opportunity of investigating his case ? ”

“No, certainly not, Minerva ! His crimes may pos-

sibly be worse than he presented them to us, just like the previous one, the religious hypocrite ;—he merited his punishment without a doubt ? ”

“ Just in the same degree as the last one did, so the punishment is measured out accordingly.”

“ From appearances the religious hypocrite was by far the greater sinner of the two, for his punishment was evidently much more severe, and the duration of his imprisonment also was infinitely longer ? ”

“ Yes ; decidedly ! Such a sin as he has committed *is the most serious that man can possibly commit against the Godhead* :—to profess to serve Him faithfully, then deliberately to neglect that profession, and instead thereof to indulge in the opposite extreme. It would be better by far if such types left this serious profession alone, for all are free agents, therefore none need devote their lives to God’s religion unless they consider themselves fit and capable for the work, then the reward will be great if the lives they lead are in accordance with their profession and their whole interests are centred upon religious works. Man is his own master ! The power of the Godhead judges according to circumstances, as I have just said, after everything is taken into consideration ;—justice perfect to all ! But now I think we may resume our examination.”

We again occupied our several positions, then the last subject was placed in front of me for interrogation. As with the others I secured this spirit, at which the stranger retreated a considerable distance into the background.

The spirit now facing me was the one I had first noticed when sent by Minerva to examine the appearance of each one of the three—the spirit who was the least overshadowed by the power of evilness.

The form of this spirit was small in all respects, and less bright than my last subject. This latter feature pointed to the fact that the life led when on earth had not been anything like so good as that of the previous one, and if I may be permitted to classify the degree of her bright-

ness I should say that it was equal to that of the Second Sphere generally. The crown of darkness surmounting this form was smaller by half than that obscuring my second subject, indicating that she had less time to be subjected to the torments of hell. The impression I received from a mental examination of this spirit was that she felt sad and troubled at the punishment she had brought upon herself. I say "she," for from the history I listened to it was evident that my captive had been a female when upon earth.

I now began to question her, but the answers she gave me were not altogether distinct, nor yet was her history freely communicated.

She had been a kind of society doll—petted, and completely spoilt by men, and thus, partially as the result of such pampering, had paved her road to the place she was now in. She cared little about trying to set a curb upon her faults when on earth, but rather gave free bent to her selfish inclinations and yearning after pleasure. She had possessed the power of drawing many admirers when young, but cared for none particularly beyond the pleasure their society afforded her. She had married one of whom she was unworthy, and soon recognised the incompatibility of their dispositions. This she tried to overcome, but ultimately gave up the effort in despair, and became generally very unhappy. She frequently quarrelled with her best friends without a sufficient cause, with the result that she was eventually without a friend. Her end came early in life, and she was committed to this region to atone for her serious shortcomings when undergoing material subjection. She frankly admitted that she alone had compassed her own end by her foolishness. She blamed none save herself, and was now repentant. She had neglected many opportunities of doing good and compensating for her evil deeds. She had needlessly brought trouble upon others when she could easily have made it happiness instead had she taken the right course in life. She knew that her conduct

seriously distressed her husband, but would not try and make amends until it was too late, then she was filled with sorrow when she grasped the full measure of her sin.

I released her and she disappeared. A common enough story, I thought, among people ; at the same time perhaps she had been educated to it, so did not fully realise the enormity of the mistake she had made. Her power of faith was very small, so that she had probably a long weary journey before her ere she could even advance into spheres of happiness. According to her own confession, there was no excuse for her being neglectful of life's proper road, so she was now reaping what she had sown.

This interview over, I had finished the work allotted to me that night. In one sense the result of it was satisfactory, but in another, oh, how sad ! and I turned to Marian and said :

" Well, Marian, you at any rate are much better off than that poor spirit just gone ? "

" Yes, sir," was her reply. " A short struggle upon earth turns the tide of an ocean of sorrow into Peace."

" Marian ! It takes more than a short struggle to counteract that tide ; it requires a continual effort—that is the general experience."

" Yes ; but, sir, time on earth is short, and the struggle is not always before man ; there are moments of rest. Here the punishment is ever weighing down the victim for perhaps many times the length of life's struggle."

" What you say is true, Marian. But with some on earth it is ever an incessant struggle, and the more severe the contest the more likely the subject is to succumb to evil in despair."

" Certainly, but all is considered by Justice."

Minerva then approached me, and, as usual, her conversation was strictly confined to business.

" Now, sir, I consider that for our present purpose you have examined enough of the different types of spirits ; but still further to satisfy man's natural desire for knowledge upon this vast and important subject,

we shall visit another region, and question a spirit there.

“ This subject, as I have already stated, is not one from which any material benefit at present will be derived by a deeper investigation ; a rough general outline is all that is required. Your next visit, then, will be to question a spirit of another region.”

“ Very well, Minerva. I shall be ready, and hope to be equal to the occasion. The undertaking will no doubt be still more exhausting upon myself ? ”

“ Yes, sir. It will probably be more difficult to obtain satisfactory results in the world we shall visit than from spirits in this region, but I shall have all arrangements prepared for you.”

“ Minerva, I have one question to ask you before returning to my body in reference to the evil spirits temporarily confined in hell ;—why is their evilness marked so differently ? ”

“ A very natural question, sir, and a very simple answer. The first of our subjects was a spirit submerged in sin, but yet possessing the power of faith. The other two were faithful spirits overshadowed by evil deeds committed in the flesh. The shadow of darkness represents the degree of each one's sin. They must remain in this region, undergoing their respective punishments, until this darkness is by degrees cleared away. The mental suffering they are severally undergoing slowly diminishes the size of this darkness, until it entirely disappears, then they are permitted to advance. This cloud is placed upon each one as he is in the act of being invested with a spiritual body. This cloud is ‘ power of evilness,’ and is their due. It has been thus placed so as justly to compensate them for their conduct and wrong-doings when upon earth. They start at the level spiritually upon which they stood when the material body was abandoned, but now, instead of lowering the level by increase of sin, the direction is towards purity, hence punishment is first meted out and undergone,

then by slow, sometimes very slow, degrees they advance upwards and onwards towards perfection.

“You can now realise for yourself, sir, that some spirits must necessarily have a long period of misery and struggling before they can attain to such a condition. If there be but a spark of the light of faith in them then there is hope, otherwise no punishment is due them from God—they are not His servants, but opposed to Him. There is, indeed, still very much to learn upon this subject, but enough has been accomplished for the present. You must now return to your body for to-night.”

We then departed, and soon I was in my body once again, worn out as usual.

CHAPTER IX

SPIRITS OF ANTICHRIST

My next visit was a complete success, even more so than one almost dare to anticipate.

As is my custom I assumed my spiritual form somewhere in space in the neighbourhood of my body, then Marian and I went direct to our habitual meeting-place with Minerva. This place is generally about the same locality, or I should rather say in the same direction from my body. How far it is off I cannot even guess, but it is far enough away in space to be where there are very few evil spirits hovering about.

On this occasion we ascended to our trysting-place slowly, and shall I say meditatively? Marian now and then conversing with me. Suddenly we were before Minerva, myself exactly in front of her, proving that the magnetic attraction between Minerva and myself must have drawn me in an absolutely straight line.

We stopped a short distance in front of Minerva—Marian as usual to my left side, and on my right, but a little distance behind, Louisa, and my faithful but retiring bodyguard, I perceived, occupied his invariable position somewhat in the rear.

At once I began to converse with Minerva, and said :

“Minerva, I am here again at your service, and eager for work. I think my spiritual powers are in a tolerably good condition at present.”

“We shall not delay, sir,” she replied, “but shall start as soon as we are ready. First of all, however, let me explain to you the programme of our arrangements, so that you may know what to expect, and hence be better

able to understand our movements. We shall go to that world you visited some short time ago, and question a spirit from the region in its vicinity. When we arrive there you may possibly have to wait somewhat until our arrangements are carried out. You understand a few of the obstacles, at least, in our way before such arrangements can be completed. It is necessary to have another interpreter as well as Marian. Your questions of course must be translated into distinct spiritual currents of inquiry ; this Marian can do as usual, but the ways of the world we are about to visit may possibly be slightly different from those of this world, hence there is need of a second interpreter to put before your subject the questions you ask in a form suitable to the particular habits and methods of that world. The answers also must undergo a similar translation so as to be understood by you, for you realise that the entire communications are not with evil spirits around the earth, but with souls who have undergone the material test upon another world, with different habits, different occupations, and different ideas, for you remember that that world is not similar to the earth. Its population must have been, or is, very much greater than that of the earth, and its position in the universe is different—in fact, all the conditions are slightly varied, therefore the knowledge of these spirits must be in keeping with the situation which maintains there, but the extent of the difference we may possibly be able in a measure to find out. This second interpreter I have already procured. All necessary arrangements are made, so that the only thing which remains for us to do is to obtain our subject. The spirit whom I have selected for interpreter of course belongs to that world, and is capable of doing whatever duty is required, therefore upon her we will rely to procure a subject for a reason of which you are already aware—*it is contrary to the laws of one world to allow spirits from another world to encroach and interfere*. You can then question this subject as you wish, in the same direction as you have

done those in the past ; the rest will be left with the interpreter. The replies perhaps will sometimes not exactly answer your questions, but that will be entirely due to differences in the general conduct of the inhabitants of the two worlds, for each question will be put to the subject in the most suitable form possible. Now, sir, I think you understand what to expect generally. The examination will no doubt consume much of your power, but it need not last longer than you wish. We will now return to your body, and then start out from it when you are refreshed."

As soon as Minerva had finished instructing me I went for a short exercise on my own account to awaken my spiritual faculties, for I have found that I derive immense benefit from such a course.

Minerva then informed me that she would accompany us from start to finish, as her presence upon such an occasion was quite indispensable.

We now turned to descend to my body—Minerva first, then we three followed, with the stranger behind. We descended gradually, but not instantaneously, for to arrive suddenly at my body is not altogether advisable, for it causes the latter to twitch somewhat violently. The nearer we approached it the slower we went—hence forewarned it, as it were, of my near presence, so that when I arrived at and took possession of it there was not the slightest shock produced. The attraction back into my body was terrible, so that it required a great exercise of power to effect an entrance deliberately and cautiously, instead of precipitately. At all times I find it difficult to counteract this persistent attraction, and the greater the distance I am away from my body the more severe the effect upon my spiritual form.

I rested but a few moments, solely to relieve the strain upon, as well as revivify, my brain, then resumed my spiritual condition once more, and found my companions waiting for me with the usual unruffled calm so characteristic of thoughtful spirits.

I looked at Minerva in a way which implied that I was now ready for the journey ; she then instantly assumed the leading position, Marian and myself following, with Louisa on my right, a short distance behind, and the stranger in his habitual location.

The procession then started and moved rapidly to the world we were bent upon reaching. For some reason we did not cover the distance instantaneously—probably to allow me to appreciate the difference as we passed from one world to the other. Soon we arrived in space clear of spirits, clear space, then we came within the radius of the power of the world which we were approaching. The effect was prominently felt by myself, the impress of spiritual presence getting stronger and more distinct. I felt also an immense distance away from my body—so far that the connection with it seemed dim, the strain all the while getting more severe, but I did my best to take as little notice of it as possible.

Now we slackened our terrific speed. The journey was over. It had probably not occupied more than half a minute of time from start to finish, and I had felt and seen all that there was to impress me upon that distance of hundreds of millions of earthly miles. We stopped, and were in the identical positions which we had assumed preparatory to commencing the journey. There was nothing to show that we had moved at all except the fact that we were in a region more exhausting to my spiritual powers ; and I could feel that I was an enormous distance away from my body.

Our relative positions noted, I at once looked about as my general habit is wherever I go. Marian then drew my attention to the immense number of evil spirits around us, countless throngs, and altogether beyond comparison with those in the vicinity of the earth. Indeed, the sight was literally appalling !

Minerva now advanced near me, and said that she was going for the interpreter ; then she vanished, followed by the stranger.

We three were now alone—solitary strangers in the abode of the evil spirits sifted from the test of souls upon another world. I could see them quickly closing in upon us—above, beneath, and on all sides at all levels. It was like being inside a ball as far as Marian and myself were concerned, but as for Louisa, she was behind and above us, no doubt doing her utmost to hold them back. We looked at them intently, the darkness of evil power everywhere conspicuous, with no redeeming brightness at all visible in any direction.

Soon they tired of gazing upon our different figures, and thinned down again until there were comparatively few around us. Marian then attracted my attention to Minerva, who was a short distance off, conversing with another spirit. The stranger then approached, and by some means hurled back the evil spirits until there was, comparatively speaking, a good-sized area of clear space around us, about a quarter of a mile across. Minerva was still where I had just seen her, but now she was very distinctly visible. I watched them both.

Minerva's companion, the interpreter, a bright spirit native to this region, now advanced in a side direction towards where the evil spirits were thickest, and secured one which she evidently considered suitable. The entire operation reminded me of a beautiful girl going into a garden, selecting a flower, then plucking it. The stranger forthwith advanced towards them and took possession of the captured spirit ; then Minerva and the interpreter, followed by the stranger with my subject, descended towards us in a crescent-like direction. The ease and grace which characterised the whole proceedings defy description. They suddenly came to a standstill, and simultaneously my companions took up their appointed positions. I know very well that individually I never moved in the least, yet the arrangement was complete. There was no feeling of disconnection anywhere ; the harmony was perfect, and I felt that I was the one whom all the others were seeking to harmonise.

I stood some distance apart by myself ; to my left and a little way in front was Marian. Louisa occupied her usual position, but considerably further back. Minerva was to my left, behind me. The new interpreter gracefully assumed her place on the same side of me as Marian, but further in front, taking not the slightest notice of me, although I tried to attract her attention. Soon the subject was brought before me, placed further away than usual and on a slightly lower level, distant about fifty feet, both interpreters being between us but towards my left side. The stranger at once resigned his charge to me, and retired to my direct right about thirty feet. He seemed still to have a hold upon the captive, for perhaps I was not capable of holding him securely myself.

I looked around to see what our audience the evil spirits were after, and, as I expected, there they were gazing intently and curiously upon the anomalous exhibition in front of them ; but all were held back at a distance measuring about a quarter of a mile across, which space around us was perfectly clear of spirits. The very atmosphere imparted a purer current now, and I felt more at ease, everything being quite in harmony. All were ready to begin. No communication of any kind had taken place save Minerva's request to me to ask my subject questions similar to those put to the various spirits I had interviewed around the earth.

I fixed my whole attention upon the evil spirit in front of me. He was a form of robust appearance, and oval in shape. His true figure, partially obscured by the power of darkness surrounding him, was tall and well shaped, with a jovial countenance. Altogether he was a fine specimen of spiritual life, almost poetic in his attitude of perfect ease, and not in the least disturbed at the prominent position he now occupied. He did not appear to force upon me any of his power as had been the case when I was examining other evil spirits ; in fact, it was almost

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the opposite, for he evinced a readiness and willingness to be questioned. Somehow, I could not refrain from admiring this spirit, although he was branded with evil entirely, with no power of faith or brightness at all. He was not withered and famished-looking like many evil spirits I had seen, and notwithstanding the fact that he was a spirit opposed to God, yet he was not degraded below the line which marks the separation.

I looked at the new interpreter and thought : “ Well, my stately friend, you certainly have selected a choice specimen for examination ! ” But there was no answer of any kind received in return ; no current of impatience, simply an attitude of waiting and expectancy ;—she may have known my thoughts, but I knew none of hers.

I then began to put questions to my subject, and showered them upon him until I was lost in a maze of questions and answers, fairly exhausted.

“ Well, my friend, you are brought here to answer a few questions I wish to put to you for my own edification. I am here from afar off seeking information, you are present to supply that information. Now I have not the slightest doubt but that you are quite content here, is that so ? ”

“ Yes, I am quite content, but have not all my own way.”

“ You, then, have no regular occupation by which to pass your time ? ”

“ Yes, oh yes ! I am constantly occupied in search after amusement.”

“ What do you like to do best when the opportunity presents itself ? ”

He was most interested—indeed, deeply interested—in tormenting spirits who had ended life’s journey on the wrong side—those who were not proper, or, as exactly interpreted, those who had no sense. Degraded they appeared to him to be, and for their stubbornness and folly he was ever anxious to annoy them.

This answer imparted to me the fact that he delighted

in harassing those souls temporarily retained in that region—God's souls.

His reply was in this manner explained to me by Marian. Thus it was clearly evident that he regarded the condition of darkness—evilness—the proper thing, and no wonder when such vast numbers of evil spirits alone were visible in all directions. I shuddered at the very thought of being placed at the mercy of such legions of evil souls !

“ Well, now !—are there many of these spirits here whom you can torment ? ”

“ Yes ! They are here in very great numbers, but most of them are unapproachable. I have no success with them ; indeed, it is difficult to find any whom I can subject to my influence, there are so many after the same pursuit as myself. There are also very many such spirits whose power is so great that they are beyond the reach even of the most powerful evil spirits.”

This question evidently tapped his strong point, and aroused his interest in a subject he was best acquainted with, for his answers were free and comprehensive, unmistakably showing that he was well posted in this particular direction.

“ Then I suppose neither you nor your allies are persistent in your efforts to torment these powerful spirits ? ”

“ Certainly not ! It was useless to persevere in the attempt ; there was no result.”

“ How do you distinguish your victims from other spirits in this region ? ”

“ Oh, that's very easy. They have a light somewhere about them, and this light, in contrast with the general darkness around them, attracts my attention. These are my prey ! ”

“ Do you know how they come to have that light about them ? ”

“ Well, that was to denote that they were fools and had to be tormented.”

(The answer precisely conveyed this meaning.)

"I suppose you frequently go to the surface of your world?"

"Oh, no! I can never get there,—that is not my ambition at all." (His answer showed marked surprise at my ignorance.)

"Indeed! I should have imagined that you would have obtained greater satisfaction there than at any other place."

"No; such a thing was not to be thought of. I am not powerful enough to fight my way there,—only the most powerful spirits can remain in that locality."

"You say you cannot get there, but have you ever tried?"

"Yes, frequently, but have always been driven back by more powerful spirits than myself."

The import of this reply conveyed to my mind the fact that the region close around this particular world was solely occupied by the most powerful evil spirits and their followers; each one having a district which he guarded, and held back all weaker spirits whenever they attempted to encroach upon his limits. No doubt they continually fought among themselves to the benefit of the poor human souls undergoing the test upon this world; at any rate, the necessity to repel this encroachment from behind would constantly detract immense numbers of them, who would otherwise be tempting those in the material condition.

The above impression which I received appeared to me likely and feasible—the natural result of the assemblage together of such hordes of evil spirits. By reason of their untold numbers they cancelled their own power to work havoc amongst the living inhabitants of that world, taking it for granted, of course, that it is inhabited.

This information imparted to me new light altogether. Man on earth must be far behind this world! This one current of spiritual information, obtained from a spirit opposed to God, revealed this fact to my mind, so I became anxious to acquire more knowledge upon the

subject. Forthwith I looked at the new interpreter. Was she not from this world? Why not question her afterwards and get at facts? So I turned to Marian, and begged her for my satisfaction to retain the interpreter awhile after the present examination was over, for I desired to ask her a few questions. I was answered to the effect that my wishes should be carried out as far as she was concerned. This done, I again fixed my attention upon the subject in front of me, and resumed the examination.

"Yes; quite so. You are not sufficiently powerful to get there. Are there many spirits on the actual surface of this world, or are most of them here?"

"Most of them are here, but all the powerful ones are engaged upon the surface, and it is useless for any of us weaker spirits to try and get there at all."

"How long have you been in this world?"

The answer implied that he had not the slightest idea how long he had been there; indeed, he was so lost to the knowledge of time that he could neither give me a positive nor yet a negative answer.

"I suppose you have many companions in this particular locality with whom you frequently associate?"

He was quite ignorant upon this subject; such was entirely beyond his knowledge; a fresh companion each time he required one. Whether such was due to the ways of this world, or on account of the difficulty experienced in finding each other amongst such a dense congestion of evil spirits, is not certain; perhaps both, for the answer clearly conveyed doubt amounting almost to ignorance upon such a subject as the one under notice.

"I suppose you never wander far away from this particular region?"

He did not understand the question at all. This was the only region that he knew of, and was under the impression that it embraced the whole world of space.

"I come from a neighbouring region myself, so there must be more!"

He could not realise this, and made no reply whatever, for evidently he doubted me. This fact indicated that he either must have been in this region, in the spiritform, for a very long time and thus have forgotten what he did know upon the subject, or that it was unknown that other worlds and regions existed, or at least were inhabited. His ignorance, however, was no guide at all, for there were many obstacles in the way between him and knowledge of the souls undergoing trial upon this world.

“ Well, my friend, do you ever journey around this region ? ”

“ Yes, I am always on the move.”

“ Are there as many spirits throughout this particular region as there are here ? ”

He was in doubt about my meaning, and replied to the effect that he was so accustomed to these numbers that he was quite at home among them, so remained in their company. Beyond this his answer conveyed no meaning. He had no knowledge as to whether the world from which he came was then inhabited, but from all the facts I gathered there was scarcely any doubt left in my mind upon this point. From what I learned the inhabitants in his time were extremely numerous, and everything was present upon a bigger scale than upon the earth. His ignorance upon all points except his own pursuits was so profound that I could obtain but little information from him, but the items that I did glean gave me a vague impression of the vastness of this region, quite sufficient to arouse my curiosity.

The evil spirits around this world appeared to me to be similar to those in the vicinity of the earth ; their powers and visible doings seemed the same ; their ideas and methods no doubt would be slightly different, but upon the whole I am inclined to think that they are very much alike in all respects.

It was in vain to question this spirit beyond his own small circle of knowledge and ideas. I examined him

much more minutely than I had done any previous subject, but the amount of information elicited was no greater than other spirits similarly placed could have given ; however, what I did obtain was certainly upon a new subject, very interesting to man, and it may possibly be the beginning of a reasonable theory in this direction.

In the middle of the examination I was compelled to take a rest, as the exhaustion entailed was very severe. I then continued it until whatever facts it was possible to glean had been obtained. My worn-out condition was such that possibly towards the close of the examination it may have prevented me from concentrating my thoughts upon any other subjects that he was most likely to be acquainted with.

At last I came to a dead stop, so was ordered to release him. He moved a little, then stood still, and waited some time as if ready to answer more questions, or, what was most likely, out of sheer curiosity. He was within our magnetic circle, which held back the masses of his equals, and perhaps he took advantage of this opportunity to take in all he could ; however, he eventually retired, and disappeared in the crowd beyond the circle.

The interview was now over, but none moved from their allotted positions. At last I broke the spell by advancing towards the interpreter belonging to this region. She was a stately spirit, beautiful to behold ; however, she was evidently aware that she was present solely to interpret. I recognised this also, but nevertheless, was very wishful to make her acquaintance, so I advanced and thanked her for her kindness in coming to our aid. I asked her but one question :

“ You belong to this world, I believe ? ”

Her answer was in the affirmative, but she begged to be excused further interrogation, intimating that she was not there for such purpose. She likewise stated that it would have afforded her great pleasure to tell me a few facts about the world in whose proximity we then

were, but that to do so was wholly beyond her present duty. Having said this she bowed, and retired a short distance. That movement gracefully terminated the conversation, and I felt it was unavailing, probably against the regulations in force in the spiritworld, to inquire further. I certainly was disappointed, but at the same time was inwardly satisfied that it was the only result possible under the circumstances,—but then surely I was justified in inquiring, anyhow !

Minerva at this stage came forward and informed me that it was not necessary at present to enter further into these matters, that at some future date I should be called upon to make these investigations, and that I should have the honour of questioning this particular spirit as I had shown such a great desire to do so. She then turned towards my late interpreter and said something to her, for the latter immediately informed me that nothing would please her more than to oblige Minerva in this respect, especially as I had evinced such a great longing to know something about that world.

Minerva then observed that in due time this would be necessary, and the arrangement now made for the future interview should hold good. This was perhaps all that could be expected, and was quite satisfactory to me, so I turned and thanked my new acquaintance, at the same time expressing a hope that we should soon meet again.

I was answered very pleasingly—indeed, most charmingly ; then she retired, and, after bidding us all adieu in correct spiritual fashion, vanished.

We lost no time in preparing for the return journey, and the moment the word was given all instantly resumed their respective positions and were ready.

Mentally I wondered what it would be like, what the effect would be, if our powerfully endowed party suddenly dashed into the solid wall of evil spirits surrounding us in every direction. As usual, whenever such thoughts possess me Minerva diagnoses as correctly as if I had

given utterance to them. Nothing was said, but we went what was to us slowly—the powerful Fifth Sphere angel Minerva in the lead. Up we dashed against this serried array of evilness at what man would call an incredible speed, and simultaneously all were hurled back, for here the power of Minerva was seen in all its might, leaving a spiritual tunnel through which we quickly passed. This tunnel was of size enough and to spare. Soon we left this shell of spirits behind, then we traversed space all but instantaneously, and in a moment were once again in the vicinity of my body.

I thanked them all for their anxiety to help me, and in return was congratulated upon having done my part well. Then I retired into my body and drew a deep breath of intense relief when I felt once more my corporeal self. The strain had been almost unbearable; it was over now, true, but I was utterly exhausted.

In a short time my brain began to show signs of a reaction against the hypernatural treatment to which it was being subjected; and a very unpleasant sensation it was, if not alarming, for it produced a most peculiar vibration in my head and in the upper part of my body. However, this in time passed off and I slept.

All my doings spiritual are quickly performed. There is no unnecessary delay, especially when such as the above programme has to be enacted. My powers seem to be able to stand just so much, then I am exhausted, sometimes completely so. Of course my present occupation, questioning evil spirits, is especially fatiguing, for I am brought into direct contact with evil, which rapidly diminishes my power, hence the exhaustion soon becomes pronounced.

My next visit had in store for me quite a new and singular experience, and one which further awakened me to the marvels of this First Sphere.

I was again before Minerva, facing her as usual, but at a little distance. Marian was upon my left, also confronting Minerva, while Louisa was behind and to

my right. The stranger, I noticed, was some distance away to the right of Minerva, in charge of two spirits who were evidently awaiting examination.

I wondered what new varieties these could be—perhaps some specially selected, of a class not yet investigated. I then informed Minerva that I was quite ready to resume work, but that I had not completely recovered from the fatigue of my last journey and interview.

“Your duties upon this occasion,” she began, “will not require your presence here long, but before proceeding with the work allotted to you this evening you must take your customary survey around, then I shall have something to say to you requiring a few explanations.

Without delay I went for a short reconnoitre in space, took in my bearings, examined myself carefully, and exercised all my powers, so that upon my return I felt wonderfully improved in every respect, and extremely anxious for work.

“Minerva,” I began, “I am very pleased to say that the practice of taking my bearings—as my brain recognises it—has been extremely beneficial to me. My properties have again recovered their wonted vigour, and now I am once more myself.”

“Precisely so, sir. They must be in a vigorous tone before you can utilise them to the best advantage. However, I have now an explanation to make to you ; it will occupy a short time, but at this stage of your progress it is of importance that you should be made acquainted with it.”

“First : this work is being undertaken essentially for man’s instruction and benefit, so then we must consider him alone. At present he is very unfortunately situated regarding his ideas about the spiritworld. As a matter of fact he knows very little, if anything at all, about the spiritual condition. He certainly has a dim instinctive knowledge that there is such an existence, but as yet he has not been furnished with any reliable data from which to estimate the spiritual state. He has

now, however, arrived at that stage in his progress in which he is quite capable of understanding and appreciating life in the spiritworld ; indeed, it is essential for his future rapid advancement that he should now be made accurately acquainted with it. At present he is practically at a standstill for want of light in this particular direction, consequently he will eagerly examine these works when they are laid before him, anxious for information. After a first perusal he will, no doubt, hesitate before accepting them—and properly so, too—but he cannot escape a thoughtful consideration of them, so by slow degrees he will recognise the absolute truth they contain, consistent with the eternal nature of the soul and also consistent with intelligence, reason, and faith. Man is pictured as a very small unit in the universe, whereas he has no inconsiderable estimate of his own importance. At the outset the awakening will be a shock to many, but all those who are thoughtfully inclined and straightforward will at once realise their position.

“ I have alluded to this subject, sir, to remind you that you yourself are no guide to the world’s thoughts and ignorance upon it. You individually are educated to spiritual conditions, and everything you have seen and learned appears to you simple and proper, but man, in the absence of enlightenment upon this subject, must be led on by degrees to a knowledge of the invisible existence, and to this end I am doing my utmost. The mission in which we are all engaged is a very difficult one to discharge, much more so than man can ever realise, for the spiritual life and all that concerns it is advanced so far beyond man’s expectation that to lead him step by step through the maze of spiritual mysteries is difficult in the extreme. My duty is clearly to reveal to him the rough principle upon which the spiritual existence is based. The plan I have adopted in order to accomplish this has been to start at the very bottom ; in some cases considerably beneath the average of man, such as

the examination of evil spirits of extremely debased habits. I shall by degrees lead him onwards step by step, hence none are justified in forming conclusive opinions until they have been enlightened to such a degree as will entitle them to pass a correct judgment upon the whole revelation. No work is properly explained until it is explained in its entirety ! But, sir, this coming examination is an event in our investigations which will be a stumbling-block to many of your readers ; that, however, cannot be helped, otherwise the many would be deprived of certain important information. My work must be done properly, and in my efforts to accomplish this I conceal nothing which I consider is for man's benefit.

“ I have here two spirits to examine : they are dangerous because of their perverted knowledge, nevertheless they must be examined. The one is a perpetual wanderer, the other a spirit replete with knowledge, but he is evil and will not accept any information save that which he collects on his own account. You shall see and examine both for yourself. You must recollect, sir, that spirits, as well as men, all have their differences, marked in some instances, and these presently to be examined are of the erratic type and gifted with properties which interest them greatly, such is their instinct !

“ These spirits whom I have here are of a class not evil in the sense that they love to do evil, because they love their occupations only. They are what I call the lowest class of frivolous spirits ; they essentially belong to this sphere ; they are constantly roaming about it from one extremity to the other, for it is their habitual propensity to do so. The class to which they belong embraces a great variety of spirits, in the front rank of which are many who advance into heaven rapidly, for they are faithful, hence servants of God, but the spirits you shall question are in the last row of this class. The very fact of being in this sphere, and under the power of

darkness, proves that they are both faithless and evil, consequently whatever opinions they have formed of this region are wholly unreliable. It is a knotty problem we have before us, I admit, but it is absolutely necessary to question them for more reasons than one, although there are decided drawbacks to our doing so, but, as I have stated before, we must begin at the bottom and work upwards. After examining these two spirits we shall have finished with spirits in this sphere.

"I particularly draw your attention to the fact that the subjects I have secured are what may be termed the learned members of evilness, but, strictly speaking, evil is not their strong point. They are in this region because they are opposed to God. They do not recognise Him as the Supreme Master; their very frivolous desires and tendencies, combined with properties which I am not allowed to explain to you, hold them here.

"We shall now examine the perpetual wanderer. I use the word 'perpetual,' for his sole desire is to wander, and he is perfectly ignorant of everything save wandering. You must ask him but few questions, since you are not capable of understanding what he knows, for he is learned in conditions concerning which man is quite ignorant."

This subject was brought before me—a busy-looking spirit and restless in the extreme. In appearance he did not strike me as being very evil, still there was something about him which conveyed to my mind the impression that he was a slave to some sinister avocation.

"Well, my friend," I began, "I simply wish to ask you a few questions for information. I understand that you constantly travel all over this region?"

"Yes, I am always travelling."

"You, then, go from world to world?"

"Yes; I wander about all the time around one world, then move on to the next, frequently travelling in space."

"You are a regular wanderer then, my friend?"

"Yes, I have always been such."

"If so, you must have visited many different worlds?"

“Yes, certainly.”

He travelled about continually—wandered, wandered, and wandered, never tired of wandering. What did that word “wandering” mean? What was the corresponding spiritual equivalent so prominently developed in him? I could not find out. It certainly signified more than our simple, indefinite “wandering” implies, yet my brain was not capable of grasping any of his doings and translating them into anything beyond what that word would cover. I soon realised this, and came to the conclusion that it was useless to question him further.

Marian impressed upon me the fact that I could not understand his true meaning, hence the word “wandering” was ever repeated in my brain, until it represented an unknown quality and quantity.

This examination was brief, as Minerva foretold it would be, still it had a lesson in it which at any rate will be food for thought. Without doubt this spiritual wanderer was a mystery to me—to my human power of knowledge—hence I suppose must remain so on record. I must admit, however, that I did not feel at all satisfied with the result of this interview.

Minerva intimated that I had obtained all that I could hope to learn; possibly in reality it was valuable information, nevertheless to me the interview was unsatisfactory.

“You see, sir,” Minerva observed, “these spirits are learned evil souls, hence it would not be proper to allow them to reveal to man their views of this world. It is not the intention of this investigation to give publicity to such opinions as those of evil spirits of knowledge. It is knowledge gathered upon an unsound basis, in a wrong direction entirely, and built up upon ignorance. I have been at great trouble to select these spirits—indeed, to find them. I intercepted these two around this world, but that is no indication that they belong to this particular region at all, for the probability is that

they come from some other world, as their occupation of professional wanderers denotes."

The second subject was next placed in front of me—the learned evil spirit, who collected his information on his own account and refused to accept the opinions of others. He was independent and self-supporting, and no doubt a very interesting spirit in his proper place.

In appearance he resembled the perpetual wanderer—perhaps a little more self-satisfied, if such term may be legitimately applied to spirits. He reminded me of some absent-minded professor or ecclesiastical dignitary—unapproachable and self-important!

I regarded him carefully, and realised that I had a singular type of spirit to examine—hipped upon one subject at least; one who knew much, yet, perhaps, nothing worth knowing to any man anxious about his soul's eternal welfare. Possibly he had been acquiring knowledge uninterruptedly for thousands of years, all the time persistently ignoring what was attributable to the Eternal Perfection and Wisdom of the Father. What was there for him to learn which did not at every point betray the secret of this Eternal Complete Power? Utterly he failed to recognise this, and supplanted his own theory instead!

There he was in front of me, a complex study, difficult to analyse. He pictured to me the immensity of the region of which we all were inhabitants, and the huge extent of its ramifications. The little I could realise was only a minute portion of the immeasurable vastness—vastness utterly beyond the hope of ever fathoming! What was I—a man, strictly limited—going to glean in such a region, where complete power, knowledge, and justice are visible everywhere?

Before me was a professor among evil spirits; one who failed to detect in any of his researches that some Complete Power existed somewhere. How were we going to converse in harmony? This very fact still further awakened in me an appreciation of the unspeakable

love and justice of the Father—that each spirit was allowed to give free bent to his own desires, and that all those who did not belong to Him were free. Those who had the brand of eternal love and obedience to the God-head He slowly gathered together in a way most suitable to their eternal unalterable properties, so that in the end all should come out equal, and have an equal reward when they are ushered into the Kingdom of God's Eternal Heaven. These—such as I am dealing with now—are not His subjects, yet they are waiting His leisure, under His control, but not subjected to His punishments. Why had Minerva thought proper to question such spirits as these?—learned, yet ignorant beyond estimate! who miserably failed to see the Hand of God in it all—some reason, no doubt!—to present a general and impartial picture to man so that he may form some idea of the vastness even of the First Sphere.

The different types of spirits in this region, their many occupations, their desires, their thoughts, have all been considered by Minerva in the discharge of her mission. I am fully aware that what information my brain has gleaned is but an infinitesimal portion of the sum total imparted to me when in my spiritual body; still, when it is all put together there will be found sufficient to furnish a reliable starting-point from which mankind may dimly estimate the nature of the life and the character of the world which inevitably awaits him.

The marvellous forethought and planning of Minerva is beyond comprehension. She is uniting two distinct and different existing powers, elevating the inferior and enlightening him upon the very life of the superior, and the conditions under which that life is carried on. It is impossible for any man to estimate even a fraction of the obstacles in the way. The necessity for careful judgment in the working of this delicate operation, so that man shall not be brought face to face with more mysteries than possible before he has been safely inducted to a knowledge of the spiritual life; the discretion

required in selecting the shortest and simplest way of effecting this, as well as the dexterity evinced in the judicious application of the power employed ;—all these various qualifications must leave an impress of the marvellous extent of Minerva's knowledge and forethought.

This learned evil spirit now before me was fully aware of the reason why he had been captured and placed in the position he now occupied, and he knew what was expected of him. I began to question him and found that he was very communicative, as well as ready to impart no inconsiderable portion of his knowledge to me. I felt, however, that I was restricted to a very cursory examination of him, for I had been informed that his knowledge and aspirations were of a nature which my brain could not grasp, hence was unable to interpret.

“ Well, sir,” I began, “ I presume you are acquainted with the reason for your temporary restraint and examination ? ”

“ Yes, I have been informed of it, and shall be very pleased to tell you something concerning the discoveries I have made for myself. I have devoted my attention to a thorough study of this world, free from the taint of any theories formed by others.”

“ How did you accomplish this ? ”

“ I began by investigating the simplest things first, then slowly gathered knowledge of all kinds and from all sources, not having taken the least notice of the ideas formed by other spirits.”

“ It must have taken you a long time to accomplish this ? ”

“ Yes ; I found out everything by degrees, carefully reasoning with myself, visiting different regions, and examining them for myself.”

“ An interesting study, indeed ! ”

“ Yes. The knowledge I have acquired has been built up upon a firm foundation, so that it cannot be anything but correct. You may implicitly rely upon

everything I tell you as being true, at the same time you may consider I am conferring a distinct favour upon you by revealing information which has cost me my uninterrupted attention ever since I came into this world."

"Upon what subjects do you know the most?"

"My investigations have been entirely restricted to the worlds and the regions surrounding them."

"Then you have visited many worlds?"

"Yes, a very great number, but I have not yet visited them all, although I have been incessantly changing from one to another."

"What method do you adopt?"

"I carefully examine the peculiar distinctive qualities and doings of these worlds. It is by no means easy to understand many things that happen, but I never abandon any point until I have arrived at a definite conclusion upon it, even suppose it takes me ages to accomplish this."

"Then I may infer that your knowledge is great concerning these worlds?"

"Yes, I know much, but have frequently been cornered for a long time upon some small point."

"Do you find all the worlds inhabited?"

"My occupation and interests are centred upon such worlds only as are inhabited—indeed, I visit none others."

"Then there must be many of these worlds?"

"Oh, yes! Countless numbers!" (His answer conveyed the impression that their numbers were so great that he could never hope to visit and examine them all.)

"You are now visiting this world, I believe?" (the earth.)

"Yes, I am at present engaged exploring here."

"How do you find it compared with other worlds?—is it as large, in the first place?"

"Well, as to the size of the worlds I cannot exactly tell. My attention is entirely occupied upon the souls."

"Are there as many here as upon other worlds?"

“No; there are not so many here as upon some worlds, but, again, others have less. Some have very many times more souls;—you may confidently rely upon my statements, for I have seen and therefore know.”

“How would the inhabitants of this world compare with others in advancement?”

“Much about the average; some were distinctly more advanced, others were only stationary.”

“How do you find out where the greater advancement exists in the inhabitants?—where does the difference lie?”

“Well, that is a question somewhat difficult to answer. One world is more advanced than another because there are more spirits in its vicinity.”

“Just so; but I mean the inhabitants of the worlds?”

“Some worlds—for instance, this one—are backward, because spirits and men do not intermix. This is one great reason which explains why some are more backward than others.”

“How do the other worlds appear to you?—I mean those on which spirits and men intermix?”

“Well, some worlds recognise that spirits are their superiors, others do not acknowledge——”

At this point I was stopped by Minerva and the connection was broken. I was not permitted to question him further, as the conversation was bordering upon subjects which man is forbidden to be made acquainted with. Minerva stated that the examination had proceeded far enough, since further inquiries would most certainly lead up to subjects upon which this spirit was not capable of giving correct explanations; besides, it had gone far enough for our purpose. I recognised this also, and clearly realised the inadvisability of questioning such a spirit beyond simple facts.

I released him at once, whereupon he evinced intense surprise and gave me a look of untold disappointment, for no doubt he was prepared to carry on the conversation for an indefinite length of time, both answering my

questions and imparting to me some of the valuable information he had discovered. He could not at once realise that I had dismissed him, but lingered on the scene before he finally disappeared.

Of the various spirits in this sphere whom I had examined, my late subject was certainly the first and only one who was able to give me any such information. He knew much from his own standpoint, for his answers conveyed the impression that he was a thoughtful student. Exactly what his evil properties were, which held him in this region, I cannot say—perhaps reasons beyond my power of comprehension. That he was confined in this sphere, however, was manifest from his very aspect, for his entire form was shaded by the darkness of evil power. Who knows but that in the past eternity he may have been a schemer to upset God's authority ?

No doubt this interview had been arranged purposely to let it be known that such a class of spirits do actually exist, but not to record any erroneous theories which he, as an evil spirit, might enunciate. In the interesting conversation I held with him he deliberately revealed the fact that the First Sphere of itself is to man immeasurable in extent, that the worlds contained in it are countless, and that a large proportion of these worlds are inhabited. He had not visited all the inhabited worlds, and had no expectation of doing so, although his whole existence was centred upon travelling from one to another. He had further stated in the course of our interview that he spent his time exclusively in gaining knowledge from the pure enjoyment it afforded him ; that he had no ulterior intention whatever in view, and that it was his determination to continue gathering information for ever.

Minerva and myself then held a short conversation in which she intimated that what I had learned from the evil philosopher was quite correct. Statements like these, she said, would not warrant a difference of opinion, for they were facts pure and simple ; but more was not allowed

me. I was also informed that the last two interviews were solely to give me some idea of the extent of this sphere from an independent source, and one opposed to God ; from spirits who had travelled throughout its length and breadth, restless and intelligent, from the inherent instinct they possessed to acquire knowledge.

“ Now, sir,” Minerva brought the interview to a close by observing, “ we have finished with this class of spirits ; the association is debasing, but their help was indispensable to complete this work. A basis has now been established upon which to advance. You may forthwith return to your body for our labours are at an end for the present,—so I retired to rest and wonder !

CHAPTER X

“ YE DO ERR, NOT KNOWING . . . THE POWER OF GOD ”

THE foregoing pages contain a correct record of my researches and experiences in the First Sphere of the spiritworld, as far as they could be accepted by my brain in its material capacity.

My spiritual body, or developed double, is a most remarkable composition, incomprehensible even to me its owner, hence it is quite beyond my power to give an accurate description of it on paper, and it is equally beyond the human brain to grasp what the reality is, even were I able to define it accurately.

Spirits in all respects are advanced beyond man to such a degree that he cannot even see them, for they have no material bodies ; he cannot hear them speak, for their language is not one of sounds, and he cannot feel them, for to his material sense of touch there is nothing to feel. If such be the case, how, then, is man's brain to be brought into such relationship with spirits that he can both see, hear, and feel them ? How is the material existence going to investigate the actual nature of the immaterial existence ? How is the mundane and inferior vital power going to associate with its higher and electric equivalent ? And how is the soul restricted going to explore the abode of the soul at liberty ? There must be an answer to these questions if the contents of this book be true, and if the experiences recorded in it veritably did take place !

What is this answer, then ? If in the past, and even up to the present day, the human brain has been so entirely restricted to matter that it could not even

appreciate the Godhead except through the material senses ; and if in the past this inability of the material or temporal to tear itself loose from matter and view unseen or eternal conditions in their true light has been the one reason for all the superstitions and errors in the Christian Church, then there must necessarily be some channel through which man is able to rise above matter if he is being permitted to approach nearer his God, and to appreciate eternal life in a way befitting his privileged position and his educated common sense.

The one reason why none in the past have been able to dissociate their thoughts from matter is solely that they have not been allowed to do so, and the unaided human brain, being material in its nature, could not possibly originate any new thought or idea.

The Godhead, being Omnipotent, when He created man endowed him with a brain capable of discharging the work imposed upon it, necessary for his progress in every respect ; hence the human brain possesses the power, the particular nerve-centres, requisite to enable man's thoughts to rise above matter and value as well as recognise unseen and eternal things in their true light.

In the past this power has been kept dormant for several reasons, but the one directly under consideration is that heretofore it has never been explained to man what "eternal conditions" actually are ; and further, from the apparent fact that he has not regarded his soul as being eternal—in its true and literal interpretation—so it is evident that he was ignorant of the way in which to utilise this power.

All this is at an end now. Man has entered upon a new era, and everything pertaining to his soul's eternal welfare is being explained to him to such a degree as to re-establish the balance of equality, so that all men at all times shall have the same chance of heaven ; and such explanations are quite in keeping with the advanced age in which he lives, as well as an expression of the degree of faith necessary for him to exercise.

The foregoing observations apply to man generally and his ability to grasp the eternal state, but as regards myself, and the peculiar nature of the work imposed upon me of actually visiting and reporting upon matters essentially pertaining to the nature and conduct of the spiritworld, a much more radical and serious transformation must necessarily take place.

First of all, my material body by compulsion must be left behind, for what could I do with it in space? And how could I resist the attractive power of matter as it exists on the earth and other worlds I have visited? And what force could propel it at the rate of millions of miles a second? And how am I to breathe in space where there is no atmosphere except within a very limited radius around the earth?

Again, how am I with my material body going to see spirits and the various sights in the spiritworld when I cannot even do the former in my normal state on earth? My body could not possibly go into the spiritworld, so it is left behind, where it is doing invaluable service through my brain. My double, or the part of my eternal soul not under restraint in my body, is utilised as the basis of my spiritual body, to which is added as much life as can without danger be withdrawn from my body. To this embryo spiritual body are loaned certain of my brain powers to make it an intelligent existence in the spiritworld. To this composite and incomplete spiritual form, Minerva, through the power of her mission, has allowed sufficient additional electric power to make my abnormal spiritual entity existable in the spiritworld. By this I mean that she endows it with power constituting the spiritual properties of seeing, feeling, communicating, &c.

This spiritual form is under severe restrictions and limitations, and my employment of it is exclusively confined to such a channel as Minerva thinks best. It is not a free agent in every sense of the word, for it cannot visit the spiritworld when the desire to do so manifests itself apart from my mission.

When prosecuting my researches my spiritual form is in the spiritworld and my material body is on earth—two separate and distinct conditions in two separate and distinct places. Each of these conditions, by itself, is absolutely useless for the work I have to discharge, hence it is only when they both act in unison that satisfactory results can be obtained, consequently to effect this they must both be in connection with each other. This connection is kept up by means of an electric communication which transmits all currents of information from my spiritual self to my material brain. The former is the agent who collects the information, and the latter selects just so much of this information as it is able to appropriate and which can be expressed in written language.

The conditions under which I prosecute my labours in the spiritworld are undoubtedly supernatural, and at first may be considered preposterous by many and even an outrage upon common sense. Possibly so, but like all other properties which man possesses, his common sense is limited, or for my present purpose I would rather put it that common sense in its application in the past has been limited to material conditions and considerations, but as soon as man has carefully considered and diligently endeavoured to understand Minerva's revelations he will have attained to a level from which he will recognise that he is able to extend the radius of its employment and use it upon immaterial conditions; hence all that will remain for man subsequently to do is to make the effort to raise his thoughts beyond matter, and then he will be easily able to appreciate the reasonableness of my statements upon this subject.

Dealing with such advanced realities as my work necessarily entails, with new powers and in a strange region, requires careful attention, perseverance, and even courage on the part of the inferior; whilst, on the other hand, the superior must show skilful generalship in conducting the entire operations in a way that will best be

understood by man. This puts before me the fact that the work I am engaged upon must have been arranged, and is supervised by one thoroughly acquainted with man's position and requirements.

Minerva, in the discharge of her mission, is laying open a vast region to the mental gaze—so vast, indeed, that one cannot grasp more than a very limited portion of its immensity. She has clearly outlined to man the future of his soul in a reasonable way, and the position it will occupy with its very marvellous and distinct powers, and she is unfolding to him regions of wonders and progress utterly unthought of by him in the past which will be mental food to many a weary and despondent soul yearning for a light to show him the road to heaven.

It has been my lot, I have been privileged as the person upon earth to whom more light upon unseen and eternal conditions thus far has been imparted. Slowly, intelligibly, and rationally have I been educated up from the normal human standard, and gradually certain of my brain-centres have been developed to such a degree as to enable me to translate electric currents, as they are employed in all spiritual communications, into the regular language of man. But, in order further to emphasise and explain the information thus transferred from Minerva to myself, I have been empowered to visit the spiritworld, and investigate for myself conditions of a higher order altogether than any which maintain upon a world of matter. No miracle whatever has been performed, nor even anything approaching a miracle, but laws of a higher order than those generally applicable to man have been called into operation, so that very tangible results have been brought about by highly advanced means.

Why I was selected for this work, rather than any one else, I know no more than did George Stephenson why he was chosen to be the inventor of the locomotive engine ; but having been thus selected, and having had the responsibility of this work forcibly thrust upon me, I can only

bow in humble obedience and do my best to discharge it in a manner befitting its importance.

Not for a moment do I assume to myself anything that I am not entitled to, for I realise my position to the full, and the limited nature of my capacity and power.

It must not be supposed that I am the real one by whom this work is done, granted that I am the means by which the spiritual and material conditions are connected, but to Minerva all the credit is due, for to her is given the mission to reveal to man information which will elevate the standard of his knowledge upon religion to a level with the intelligence and scientific advancement of the twentieth century.

Minerva takes me into the spiritworld, and there she clearly and lucidly expounds to me particulars of an advanced and important nature, not omitting the minutest detail. When this is completed, and my power exhausted, I return again to my material body and carefully review everything that has transpired. Next day I record my experiences to the limit of my brain's recollection, Minerva being present all the time to supervise my doings and see that every new item of information is put down in black and white and properly explained.

Work which necessitates dealing with electric currents of information is not by any means what may be termed simple. Indeed, it is abstruse in the extreme; and to bring down to material language the true meaning of these currents is in itself a study, for this portion of my work I consider is the most important of all.

Never yet has Minerva requested me to erase any of my writings as being incorrect. She knows what I am about to note down, and occasionally turns it over in my brain, as it were, in order that I may be able to explain it better, and not infrequently she prompts me to insert additional explanatory remarks.

The above is the system upon which this work has been written, and no item or clause has been inserted in it

without the sanction of Minerva, or Marian, in the way above stated.

The foregoing experiences, I am informed, are but the solid foundations upon which other works will eventually be built. The firmness and truthfulness of the basis literally astounds me, for I have seen for myself, I have questioned, and have been answered, and the more I know about spiritual matters so much the more do I realise that there are still infinitely greater things to be learned. Minerva's remark upon this point is essentially correct when she says: "Man will but advance in knowledge, there to be beset by many more incomprehensible mysteries." However, it is one step nearer the Father in the most important direction, and I cannot help but recognise and appreciate its value.

I have had numerous conversations with Minerva, and know her ways and manners as far as it is ever possible to know them; and a few words of explanation concerning one who has done more for man's advancement than any other agent, either as spirit or man, since Christ was upon earth nineteen hundred years ago, will not be out of place.

Let me present her to my readers as I have frequently beheld her in the spiritworld, although to do so accurately is literally impossible, so that the most I can attempt, in the nearest way in which words will permit, is to explain an appearance which was never intended to be expressed in human language.

I see her before me now, and the general outline she presents is a form of brightness very pronounced and very powerful. This complete form is composed of two distinct parts, yet they are both so intimately blended together as to present simply a mass of brightness. The first of these two parts is the true figure of Minerva. This figure in shape generally resembles her eternal soul, and as the material body is made in the image of the soul, so this figure resembles what her body was, but is now without any material properties. The second of

these parts is the power, which is evidenced by brightness, belonging to the figure or soul. This power is her own individual property for the time being, whilst undergoing atonement in the spiritworld, and is testimony of her position in that world and of the exalted nature of the work she is capable of discharging. This power radiates in all directions from her own figure, and is so intense in its immediate proximity as partially to obliterate her true self. For a distance of about eight feet in every direction from her figure this power is so concentrated as to present a homogeneous mass of brightness; it then diffuses itself gradually for more than one hundred feet in all directions from her figure, this area comprising the radius of her power, and is then lost in space. Thus these two parts—although not two parts in reality—constitute the whole form of Minerva. The above-given definition is not by any means accurate as I see her when in my spiritual state, but it is the best I can do, and may be sufficiently definite to enable my readers to form a dim idea, at any rate, of what Minerva looks like.

Her figure appears to me as powerful and intelligent in every respect, and carries with it an air of superiority and dignity. It is impossible to associate her with anything frivolous or insincere. All her statements are terse and matter-of-fact, and each one clear and carefully explained. Although possessed of such commanding properties, and so exalted in her attainments, yet she is thoughtful and kind in the extreme and never forgets, whilst conversing with me, that I am practically ignorant of everything spiritual, therefore she always remembers to explain what must be to her the most trivial matters.

In appearance she is beautiful to look upon, yet perhaps her character is too pronounced and her intelligence too forcibly developed in every direction to present an appearance of intense beauty; but then this impression may but be due to my power not yet being able to appreciate the beauty of such perfectly harmonious power.

Minerva is a spirit whom one would never think of disobeying. She is mistress to perfection in her position, and is capable of doing her work as few spirits could. She is always ready with all her arrangements, previously decided upon. I go before her respectful and submissive, ready to listen to and obey one whose superiority is far beyond comprehension by man, for even my spiritual form, with its more advanced properties and knowledge, can only form a faint idea of her power and attainments.

I am her subject, and am trained and educated to spiritual work directly under her supervision, so that what I know spiritually has been taught and explained to me by Minerva herself, who is fully equal to the task before her. I cannot find words sufficiently expressive to emphasise the fact that she is competent, as I now see her before me, to converse with any man upon earth, and in one current to satisfy his curiosity and assuage his doubt, and so completely and finally could she accomplish this that that man could never obliterate the remembrance of the interview from his mind.

It is impossible to conjecture upon, much less realise the complex nature of the mission Minerva has under her sole charge—to unite man and spirit—with the solid and insurmountable reality staring man in the face, that one is of matter and in a world of matter and the other is of a higher invisible organisation and in an electric world; that from sphere to sphere the spirit advances, ever becoming purer and more powerful until the region of eternal bliss is reached, where every condition is complete and perfect, and where the Father rules in love and wisdom; there to dwell among spotless souls, all ever eager to serve their Master, in peace and harmony, in happiness and perfection. It is a long, long road to that region from man's humble position on earth, yet Minerva, through her mission, has clearly revealed to all the road they have to travel. Nor does she stop here, but has also exposed a glimpse of the existence of spirits not destined to reach perfection under God's

laws, and this glimpse is sufficient to impress us with a faint idea of the unlimited power of God. The reasons for this revelation, the explanation of the soul's subjection upon earth—indeed, the whole picture of man's position—is laid before him in a form which is almost incredibly rational, and reveals the Father impartial and caring for all. This information now given to man is his due ; he has earned it, he is entitled to it, and he has reached an era of progress in which he requires it.

God in His Power and Knowledge knows all things, and in His Justice did not overlook this fact ; therefore, when all necessary preparations had been made, He deputed Minerva to execute His commands, and admirably and without a flaw are these commands being carried out.

Marian also occupies an important position in my spiritual investigations. Her duty is to commune with me, and to assist me in all respects when dealing with spirits, but more especially in connection with my brain powers. She is responsible for the brain's reception of my various spiritual impressions in correct form, and of late she has acted as interpreter in the spiritworld, for my questions as put are too earthly, too material, to constitute questions at all to spirits ; and in communicating replies to me they have to be presented in a manner most acceptable to my brain. She is constantly at work attending to the proper supervision of my material body, so that Marian's contributions to my success in the spiritworld must by no means be underrated, for her duties are in every respect necessary.

Marian is a spirit of the Third Sphere, hence inferior in all respects to Minerva ; still, her appearance is one of intelligence and superiority above man to such a degree that what were weaknesses in her character when upon earth have now become strong points, and what were pronounced features have toned down almost to the level required before perfection can be reached. I am not making a mistake when I say that her character, and

hence her features, would be acknowledged by man as having attained to what he considers the standard of perfection.

The appearance of Marian, as represented in my brain, is that of a smaller power than Minerva. Her form is not so occluded by brightness, and the radius of this brightness is not so great, nor yet is it so dense. Indeed, to me the entire form of Marian is more pleasing to look upon, for Minerva is too far advanced, and her superiority is too pronounced to link in common with my small properties and insignificant knowledge. Marian, not having progressed so far, is thus more nearly my equal, and as such I can better converse with and understand her.

It is a beautiful spectacle to behold Marian's form, and her real figure is both graceful and pleasing. I cannot, however, explain why my impression is such, or wherein lies the gracefulness. I seem to know and see that such is the case, but my brain is too dull to realise the particulars.

Marian is with me almost continuously, whether in the spiritworld or not, and has ever a kind and encouraging word when I require it. I understand her better than any other spirit with whom I am acquainted, hence we are the closest of friends, and she is a great help to me generally.

Louisa is a late arrival. She is also of invaluable assistance in a certain direction, and her duties are to restrict my bodily interference, as well as generally to protect it, and develop certain of my brain-centres especially. More than this I am unable to explain, but such is directly in connection with the further development that Minerva is accomplishing in me.

In figure Louisa is tall, if such an expression be properly applicable to spirits ; at any rate, that is the opinion I have formed of her size. Her character is very decided, firm and impressive, and she is always ready to explain anything and converse with me whenever I wish.

It may be of interest here to remind my readers of a certain recorded interview I held some time back with three of Marian's dearest friends from her sphere. It may also be remembered that I was informed that one of them would at some future date be connected with or help this work in some way. Louisa is one of these three spirits ; she remembers the occasion well, and tells me that she had very frequently wished to see me again.

Our friend "the stranger" is indeed a stranger to me. In my estimation he is a spirit of extraordinary type as he now conducts himself, but of course this may possibly be due to his mission's requirements. Only once have I been at all able to question him, and even then I could not extract anything of a satisfactory nature, so that he still remains a mysterious and unfathomable spirit to me. I do not even exactly know the nature of his mission, beyond that he acts as a kind of general help to Minerva and myself. He follows me in my spiritual expeditions, is always at Minerva's beck and call, and keeps a paternal eye upon us both.

In appearance he is bright, but his form is not clearly represented in my brain, and he invariably assumes an attitude of obedience and strict attention, never delays, and is always ready at the exact moment, so as to make all things work in harmony ;—such harmony is visible in all my spiritual undertakings.

The appearance which spirits present in the dim mysterious atmosphere of the First Sphere is novel to the material brain. The spiritual power of vision is entirely different from that possessed by man, for it is not consistent with spiritual requirements to see anything beyond that which the mind wishes to look at ; hence it is not often that one looks for spirits generally, or gazes at them as they are studded here and there in space, at all levels and at all distances.

As the First Sphere is the abode of evil spirits, so it naturally follows that they are by far the most numerous here, but then they are by no means easy to see at a

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distance, and it is equally difficult to tell how far they are away from one, for they are visible not by any brightness they possess, but being entirely surrounded by the power of darkness they render the subdued light of space in this region still darker at the exact spots where they are located.

Bright spirits are not frequently seen in the region around the earth, but when I do have the good fortune to visit a locality where several of them are congregated together they present the appearance of bright spots, varying in size and degree according to the distance they are removed from me and the power each one possesses.

All spirits are composed of two parts, the internal figure and the surrounding power, no matter whether the encircling power be that of brightness or of darkness, for whatever appearance is manifested depends entirely upon the eternal qualities of each spirit.

Spirits are electric existences, and their bodies are composed of electric substance, which, although invisible to the human eye, is every whit as dense to spirits as matter is to man. It is substance of a higher nature than man knows it to be, substance more closely approaching the perfection of electric power. Spirits cannot penetrate through, nor yet are they transparent to each other.

Spirits of higher degree, when in the act of travelling, hurl to one side or another those of inferior power, but in such a way that neither of them experience the least feeling of anything having happened. No such impact takes place as when upon earth two bodies of matter come in violent contact with each other.

Spirits are composed of substance and possessed of power, both greatly advanced beyond man, hence, just as the latter can feel or shake hands with his neighbour so can the former. Spirits, however, do not indulge in such methods of greeting, for they do not, as a rule, penetrate each other's radiating power. Still, upon one occasion with my spirit hands I did feel those of Marian,

but the act of shaking hands was entirely out of keeping with and unnatural to our conditions, and it was only for the sake of information that I asked her to grant me this privilege. The sense of touch was certainly developed, for I could feel that her hand was of substance ; still, the result in no respect resembled the well-known sensation of touch so distinctly appreciable in man.

Actual physical contact is characteristic of the material nature of human substance, but with the advanced spiritual substance the sense of feeling is of quite a different and higher order, as evidenced in the preceding pages.

The distinguishing differences between spirit and man are distinctly defined, and just as all the dealings of the latter with material substance are natural to him, and what he alone expects, so also are all the dealings of the former with electric substance normal to him.

The foregoing explanations are very curtailed, for I must not go beyond the statement of bare facts as they are represented in my brain. Further, I am fully conscious that what I have recorded is not an accurate translation of the original, but more I am unable to do, because these very particulars are just beyond my material grasp^r; indeed, they seem to be left behind with my spiritual body when I abandon it and return to my natural one. It is not satisfactory to be thus placed, but I think most of my readers will be able to grasp the reality of my position—that I am bringing into operation, for the first time in man, certain abstruse nerve-centres which have hitherto been kept in abeyance, for as at present developed the human brain has never yet been able to gauge unseen and eternal things, nor yet does any human language contain words to translate conditions about which nothing is known or even remotely conjectured.

Man will never be able fully to realise the very inferior position he at present occupies until he tastes and breathes the atmosphere of freedom in the spiritual form ; then, and not till then, will he discover the insurmountable

difficulties which make it impossible to explain the delicate and subtle spiritual nature to him.

My journeys in the spiritworld are made as pleasant and easy as possible. When my powers are not exhausted the spiritual character is to me one of freedom and charm in the extreme. The vision of similar beings to myself, but in the enjoyment of more complete liberty and happiness, is beautiful to witness. The refreshing reassurance that space imparts is inexplicable. All communications are smooth and harmonious, conveying information in simple form, yet my poor brain at times refuses to acknowledge any of it at all. Spiritual vision is an extremely exalted property, perfectly adapted to its unique requirements; and peace, harmony, sympathy, and love are conspicuous features during my visits.

Evil spirits produce the opposite effect upon me, and if it were not for the careful planning of my instructors, in occupying the particular positions they do, so as to bring me into harmony with the various currents, the consequences would be much more exhausting to me. Without their power and assistance I am quite satisfied that it would be useless for me to attempt to converse with evil spirits; perhaps I should be mastered by the evil power they possess and taken prisoner, for it must be remembered that, although admitted into the spiritworld, still I am neither spirit nor man, very ignorant, practically powerless, and above everything anxious for knowledge.

From first to last my dealings with spirits betray the secret of the presence of great authority somewhere—this must be Minerva! All my spiritual works reveal careful forethought and arrangement—distinctly traceable to Minerva; under such lofty guidance, then, I cannot come to grief, and what is more, fear in this respect never enters my mind.

A few words at this present stage of our progress I do not think will be out of place, by way of reviewing the

chief reasons, from a material standpoint, why the Profession of Christianity now finds itself almost at a complete deadlock, and why there are so many misgivings on the part of professed Christians, let alone waverers and doubters, about accepting certain of the teachings and doings of Christ.

When Christ entered upon His public career and promulgated the astounding doctrines of faith, good works, and the resurrection, He was perfectly well acquainted with the difficulties which would beset His every step, and He gave expression to this knowledge when He said to Nicodemus and to others present :—If I have told you earthly or material and visible things, and you believe not because you cannot understand them, how is it possible that you can either understand or believe when I tell you about heavenly or eternal and unseen things? In giving utterance to this remark Christ proved His authority, for not only was this true of mankind at the period when He was upon earth, but it is in manifest and indisputable evidence among all Christian communities even up to the present day.

“I know whom I have chosen ” were the words which Christ made use of when referring to the selection of immediate followers He had made—“and one of you is a devil,” He exclaimed, thereby openly and meaningfully confessing the unchangeable nature of the soul, for even He, endowed with All Power from the Father (the complete power of the Holy Ghost), could not change that which is eternally the same.

Christ selected His apostles as ordinary examples of the average intelligence of the age—men whose minds were open to conviction, and not warped by any sacerdotal bigotry or hypocrisy. He expounded such matters to them as were necessary for man’s eternal salvation, full well knowing that their privileges were few, that their progress had scarcely begun, and that their intelligence was essentially of an extremely limited order.

Under such conditions it was of course necessary that Christ should explain His doctrine and perform His works in a way befitting the intellectual attainment of the age. Further, whenever direct reference was made to the eternal condition, it was manifest from the material-bound nature of their minds that they could not grasp what was said in its true light, hence the most that could be expected was that they should put a material interpretation upon subjects which in no sense of the word had anything to do with matter.

In all ages God reveals Himself and His works in a way befitting the intelligence of the age in which the revelation is made. This must necessarily be the case, for what benefit would accrue to any one by recording in black and white particular conditions, theories, and commands, when they were, in every sense of the word, utterly beyond the mental grip of the age?

The extent to which Christ could reveal the Godhead, and other eternal matters pertaining to the soul's welfare, was measured and limited by the extent to which His disciples could receive the same, consequently, whenever eternal subjects are enunciated or referred to by Christ they are invariably construed as material conditions, and even up to the present day this material interpretation is accepted as being essentially a true definition of eternal conditions.

Such was the phase of the human intelligence nineteen hundred years ago, and it is evident from testimony that, in whatever other directions the world may have progressed, in this one particular respect—inability to raise the mind above matter, and appreciate unseen and eternal things as what they really are—man has practically remained unchanged until Minerva was sent to expound to his now enlightened and yearning intelligence what eternal conditions actually are.

I have just stated that there is testimony that such has been and is the case,—yes, and abundance of it too!

The essential point in every Christian religion is "faith," and with faith necessarily goes "good works";—love towards God, and love towards one's neighbour. All Christians exercise faith : *it is the distinguishing brand which every eternally good and loving soul exhibits upon earth to distinguish and separate it from other eternal types.* Hence all those who exercise faith will eventually reach heaven and spend the future of eternity in a state of perfect happiness. Such being the case, it follows as a natural consequence that all Christian religions are correct, no matter what man may think and say to the contrary.

Faith is the essential point in every Christian religion, *and the only one necessary for salvation.* But man is not content to stop at the exercise of faith. The yearning of his soul to assert its own particular unchangeable instinct of love and obedience has prompted him to hedge round his religion with all kinds of difficulties, which although they act as obstacles to many of man's fellow creatures, who also exercise faith, still they serve as beacon-lights to the professor of that particular religion—evidence of the presence of different types of faithful souls.

This yearning of the soul to return to its eternal condition, however, is limited to the power of a material body and the knowledge to be obtained through a materially restricted brain ; hence all these safeguards and danger signals which man, in his zealous eagerness after eternal life with that same God whom his soul loved in the past, has erected as the standard of his religion, be they recognised as rites and dogmas, are essentially material in their conception, and as such are essentially incorrect as far as they have reference to eternal conditions.

One religion in its earnest longing after more help invokes the mother of Christ (Mariolatry) to come to the assistance of its devotees ; done with the highest and best intention, but evincing an utter ignorance of eternal

conditions, for relationship is but earthly, confined to flesh and blood ; the soul is eternal, hence is unrelated to any other soul ; angels are neither male nor female ; eternal existences cannot procreate other eternal existences,—in the beginning (of time) God created them (the bodies) male and female ; all are equal when they reach heaven, hence no one angel can have more power and influence to intercede than another ; the soul is eternal, unchangeable, hence it is even beyond the power of the Father to make an eternally evil soul good. Thus this doctrine is erroneous in every respect, the material being openly acknowledged as the eternal.

Another religion holds up as a *sine quâ non* belief in what it calls the Thirty-nine Articles ; done with the most sincere and praiseworthy of motives, but, as a matter of fact, practically all these professions of faith are essentially wrong either in fact or intention. They were conceived in a material sense ; they fail to recognise the true eternal condition, and the entire compilation is a typical sample of mediæval intelligence.

Other religions pin their faith in the Doctrine of Election, or in the Atoning Blood of Christ, and preach to their followers to leave all to Christ, who has done everything for them, for they are the Elect ; when neither Paul (although writing under inspiration) nor any man since Paul was upon earth, until Minerva revealed it, knew the true import of " Election " in its beautiful and glorious fulness ; while the interpretation of the meaning of " the Atoning Blood of Christ " is essentially incorrect, for no amount of blood-letting (material) can change an unchangeable soul (eternal).

Another religion claims that the Gospel was entirely lost to man for centuries on account of his sinfulness and universal apostasy, and was restored again less than a hundred years ago through a person named Joseph Smith. This religion, imputing justice to God, and with a sincere impression that it is the one correct profession of Christianity, recognises that all men have mothers in heaven,

preaches a married state after death, and under their supreme knowledge (through revelation, they say) of what "eternal" means, says that as man is so once was God, and as God is so will man be—and yet all eternal conditions are unchangeable. Criticism of such a profession is quite uncalled for.

These few cullings from an almost unlimited amount of evidence at one's disposal clearly testify to the very restricted nature of man's privileges, and as clearly prove that he could not make any real advance nearer to God until this ban of limitation, this confounding of temporal and eternal conditions, was removed.

To Minerva, then, all are indebted for being empowered to draw back the veil and see with the eyes of reason and faith what eternity really means, what the soul really is, and what really will become of it.

The next stumbling-block placed right in front of man at every step he makes to fathom the works of God is his complete ignorance of the real nature of God's Power, or to put it in the expressive words of Christ: "Ye do err, not knowing . . . the Power of God."

Here, again, the strong matter-of-fact mind of man asserts itself, so that in any consideration of the Father's Power, and His ability to create or destroy man immediately refers back to his own material power as the normal standard from which to estimate the Eternally Perfect Electric Power of God. Here again, also, all thanks are solely attributable to Minerva for awakening the human understanding to a clear realisation of the fact that there is and can only be one eternally perfect and unlimited power, out of which all inferior powers are created and into which again all inferior powers must ultimately be resolved.

We have now arrived at the stage from which I feel it my duty humbly to endeavour to trace up this electric power, as employed by man, to the Eternal Omnipotence of the Father, and thus demonstrate that they are one and the same power, at the same time to prove the

impossibility of any one ever being able to grasp what perfect power is and what it is capable of doing.

Considerable difficulty has been felt in the past in accepting any or all of the miracles of Christ as being genuine, and this difficulty is becoming increasingly more pronounced just in proportion as man is progressing in the development and exercise of his intellectual faculties and in his scientific attainments, and at the same time is being kept at a standstill in his knowledge of unseen and eternal things.

It may possibly be that some of the miracles performed by Christ are not sufficiently backed up by reliable data to satisfy the sceptical minds of many, but it cannot possibly be denied by any intelligent and impartial person that some of these miracles, at least, are genuine, so that admit one miracle only and the principle is established that miracles can be performed.

To perform a miracle and to create are, for my present intention, almost synonymous terms, for they are both similarly performed.

The question now to be answered is : What is the meaning of "to create" in its true interpretation ? To say that "to create" is to make something out of nothing is not an accurate definition, and as such is not acceptable to the educated, thoughtful individual. The "nothing" is too indefinite, it leaves off too abruptly, it does not go back far enough, it does not explain what the "nothing" is, and consequently it is for this very reason that many are reluctant, and even unable, to accept miracles, or anything reputed to be created. "To create" literally means to make something unseen and eternal assume a visible, material, and temporary form. Everything created must necessarily have an end, because it had a beginning, and the very fact of its having a beginning proves unmistakably that its temporary condition is not its eternal condition, hence the time must eventually come when this temporary condition will end because its existence is associated with time and therefore limited

by time ; but eternity knows no time, consequently such temporary condition, being originally created out of eternal elements, must sooner or later revert to such eternal elements.

The above explanation at first sight probably may appear complex, but once thoroughly grasp the meaning of the word "eternal," and then the foregoing definition will be gratifying to the mind as well as solve what has hitherto been considered a difficult problem.

The next question to be answered in this attempt to explain how it is as easy for God to create as it is for man to walk—indeed, did the latter but know it, he can perform miracles in his own humble way—is to examine into the great difference between "man" and "God."

"Man" is of matter, temporary and restricted in every respect, and where he feels the pinch of the position most at the present day is in the limitation of his intelligence and knowledge. It was never intended that man should ever be anything but what he is—limited, finite. It was one of the special purposes which Omniscience had in view when man was created that he should be restricted to certain bounds, so as literally to force him to manifest his eternal colour—the bent of his eternal power, now in a dormant state.*

God has limited man so as to compel him to exercise faith as the only means by which he can grasp unseen and eternal things. The earthly test is faith, and faith can only be exercised through assistance from the Holy Ghost, hence it is only those who believe in the Godhead who can possibly grasp the eternal condition.

"God" is the very antithesis to man, for He is eternal, also complete and perfect in the eternal sense, and if such, then He possesses All Power. Now what is "All Power" in the eternal sense ?

In this consideration man's limited properties declare

* To be elsewhere explained in its entirety.

themselves unmistakably, for he cannot determine what Omnipotence really is.

“For the things which are seen are temporal ; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” God is unseen, therefore eternal, and He, being unseen and eternal, is consequently not of flesh and blood. God being eternal—without beginning, without end, and unchangeable—therefore all God’s properties also must necessarily be eternal, hence God’s power is eternal, unseen, without beginning, without end, and unchangeable, thus God’s power is not the same as man’s power.

All the eternal power in the universe belongs to God, for the will-power and knowledge which each eternal soul possesses do not strictly come under the category of “power.” Now if God possesses all the eternal power in the universe, then there is no more power left for any other eternal soul to seize and lay claim to, hence God is and can only be the One Omnipotent Power. Further, if God possesses all the eternal power in the universe, then this power, from the fact of its being perfect, is unlimited ; thus it follows as a necessary consequence that there is nothing impossible with God, no matter what man’s restricted intelligence or deliberate scepticism may think or say to the contrary ; hence God is able to create or destroy at will.

Man, heretofore, has been quite unable to explain this abstruse subject correctly, solely because he has not been permitted to do so, for in the past neither has his brain been able to appreciate what the eternal condition was nor yet had he the knowledge of the true nature of God’s power—he erred, not knowing the Power of God !

The question next to be answered in the solution of this very complex proposition is : What is the nature of God’s power ?

It has been stated, and I think proved beyond doubt, by Minerva, to the satisfaction of any enlightened mind open to conviction, that God’s power is electric power, and that the Father is the nucleus, or central point, or

essence, of this perfect electric power. But, in order further to substantiate the veracity of Minerva's statement and proofs, I think it will be well to consider this power as it is utilised by man, as it is employed in the spiritworld, and as it exists in its eternally perfect condition in heaven.

Electric Power as utilised by man

For this purpose it is quite unnecessary to trace up man's progress from the comparatively primitive condition he was in nineteen hundred years ago until the time when he discovered that in electric power he possessed an agent infinitely more potent than any other power he had hitherto employed.

At the very outset of man's discovery of this power he was forcibly impressed by the fact that its nature was wholly beyond his capacity to grasp, and at the present day, despite the great advance he has made in the employment of it, he is still more than ever in the dark in this respect ; and, further, the more intimately he becomes acquainted with it, and the more thoroughly he utilises it, so much the more will his perceptive organs convince him of the abstruse and unfathomable nature of this power.

Inasmuch as man's power is material in its nature and all his ideas and thoughts at present circumscribed by material considerations, and since it is of course necessary that before he can employ electric power he must first obtain it, so he intuitively has recourse to a material source from which to extract it. Yes ; but if, as Minerva says, electric power is eternal in its elements, how comes it that matter contains it ? The answer is a very simple one, a very cogent one, and a very explanatory one—but I leave my readers to supply the same.

Electric power, as obtained by man, is present in its very crudest form in a temporary condition, and is used by temporary existences in a temporary way—by material man in a limited manner, furthest removed from God of

any living form, consequently his acquaintance with God's power must be of the dimmest and most imperfect nature.

Man calls electric power a fluid, but it is invisible to him except in its employment through matter, and it is intangible to him save when used through a material agency. Man calls it a natural force ; such inference is quite correct, inasmuch as all matter contains it, and it is only from matter that man up to the present date has procured it.

But let us consider this subject in its higher and truer light. Matter is visible, free electric power is not visible ; matter is tangible, but unreduced, unconcentrated electricity is not tangible ; hence electric power, if in one sense it be a natural force, is also in another and more comprehensive sense an eternal power, for in its free state it is neither seen nor felt, and things which are not seen are eternal !

I am fully satisfied that there is no truly sincere and speculative electric scientist or investigating practical electrician who is not perfectly convinced that in electricity—even as he employs it in its non-progressive and degraded form—he is utilising a power altogether beyond what may be termed a natural power ; and if in no respect it resembles any natural power, and if it possesses properties essentially belonging to the eternal condition, then the inference may very reasonably be drawn that in its higher and more subtle ramification it is purely eternal in its nature and operations.

Man is being permitted to advance, and will continue to advance in his use of electricity until he reaches that point where both mind and matter cry out : “ Stop ! We give it up ; we can go no further in the utilisation of this power ; it is beyond our capacity now ; some other substance of higher properties than we possess must be employed if you wish to investigate this mysterious power still deeper.”

That man is progressing at an incredible pace in the exercise of electric power goes without saying ; and one

of the latest and distinctly the most advanced electric inventions is that of wireless telegraphy, for in the utilisation of this invention man is unconsciously verifying Minerva's revelations.

Now let us for a moment consider the general principle upon which common sense suggests that this invention is worked. Individually I know nothing about it in any respect, so far as the particular nature of the method adopted is concerned. First of all, what in my own nomenclature I shall call a transmitter is provided, through which or in which a strong electric current is generated. This transmitter is elevated as far as possible above the actual surface of the earth to prevent all electric currents from being deflected and absorbed by the earth's attraction—the electric composition of matter evincing a natural affinity to its like. This concentrated current of electricity is then, as it were, ejected into space, and collected at the other end by what may be termed a receiver. Now what really takes place the very instant this electric current is ejected from the transmitter? It creates, as a matter of fact, an electric wave. Yes. But what with? Certainly not with the densely agglomerated particles of atmosphere in such juxtaposition to the earth (material), but with the eternal, electric atmosphere of space *—*the spiritual atmosphere of the First Sphere!* This created electric wave, in contact with its like (both eternal), is carried on persistently through space, and in its onward course is intercepted by the delicate receiver, and the contents of this electric wave are ultimately reduced to material writing through a material agency.

The foregoing explanation is extremely simple and rational, in every respect consistent, and is a remarkable verification, from a scientific approach, of the absolute truthfulness of this great revelation, for eternal conditions know no distance.

I have previously stated that in a humble way man

* There are three eternal electric powers permeating space.

himself can perform a miracle, and I am certain that if any human being of the first century were to stand near the elevation whereon the receiver is placed, and were to receive a message from his friend nearly three thousand miles away, without any visible or known means of connection, he would declare such to be almost as great a miracle as raising the dead. Man at the present day is being told the way in which it is done, hence the miraculous has disappeared from the miracle. Ye do err, not knowing the Power of God !

Electric power as it is utilised in the spiritworld

From man's past and present experience with electric power, it is but in keeping with reason that he should progress in his employment of it until eventually he is brought to a standstill, for matter has its limit, beyond which it cannot advance. When man has arrived at this eminence he will have attained to the exact level from which its employment is begun in the lowest sphere of the spiritworld ; but in the spiritworld it is approached from another standpoint altogether, no longer the standpoint of a material body—matter could go no further—but a body of different and higher substance in all respects,—substance more nearly approaching perfect electric power than that of which man is composed, hence capable of utilising electricity as it is present in its nobler and more refined condition. This spiritual body, being of electric substance, is in reality a body of power rather than of what man classifies as substance. This electric body must, as a matter of necessity, live in an electric, spiritual atmosphere, just as material man must live in a material atmosphere ; and in the foregoing pages some of the general conditions which obtain in the First Sphere have been feebly described, and these conditions are such that man can appreciate if he so feels inclined.

The spiritworld in each of its spheres is composed of electric power, and the higher the sphere the more

nearly the elements composing it approach to pure electricity.

This spiritworld is very emphatically connected with the material test which the eternal souls are undergoing upon earth, for in its different spheres it provides means for the atonement of all sins and shortcomings committed upon earth, and thus eternal souls are enabled to reach a state of perfection in every respect equal to the standard which their several dormant eternal powers possess.

The spiritworld consists of six spheres, five of which may be deemed spheres of progress, for the First Sphere is really no progress at all beyond what maintains upon material worlds, with the single exception that spirits in the First Sphere possess electric bodies and live in an electric world, instead of existing upon earth with material bodies. Whatever conditions, therefore, have been described in the foregoing pages as existing in the First Sphere must be accepted with the distinct understanding that the spiritual side of it is solely tenanted by sinful outcasts, and hence as such they are not allowed anything beyond what their evil properties most justly merit. They certainly have electric bodies and live in an electric world, but when this is said all is said. They are not gifted with any power save will-power, for the power of evilness is nothing more than will-power developed in the direction of evil instead of good. They exist in what is to advancing spirits a dull, shady atmosphere, under conditions the very reverse to privilege, hence they are barely electric forms, and live in an atmosphere which is barely electric.

Notwithstanding the above statements, evil spirits are advanced beyond man, for the spiritual condition generally is ahead of the material one, consequently evil spirits in hell see and are in possession of the eternal, electric power of God in a higher degree than man can ever enjoy it upon earth. Such being the case, man can realise, if he will, how extremely far removed he is, in his present condition, from being able to comprehend the

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real nature of the power of God, hence there is no wonder that he doubts what is called the miraculous.

The Second Sphere is the first and lowest region of progress. It is a world where reward is meted out to all who deserve it at this standard. It is a world of brightness, peace, happiness, and sinlessness; and the spirits who inhabit it are bright, being in every respect much beyond man's condition upon the earth.

The Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Spheres are all regions of progress, in each one of which the advance is distinctly more pronounced, until in the Sixth Sphere every power, every condition, and every angel is all but perfect. In each one of these spheres the knowledge which spirits possess is greatly increased beyond what is evident in the one below, so that what were once mysteries to them gradually are being solved. In the Sixth Sphere angels are pure, and practically perfect in every respect save "power." They see the mighty works of God all around them, and, indeed, they themselves are all but perfect samples of the extent to which God's eternal electric power is exercised. They know everything pertaining to and befitting their exalted positions, and are immeasurably removed beyond man's loftiest imagination; nevertheless, almost perfect though they be, and unutterably beyond man's comprehension though they are, still they know less of what absolute eternal perfection is than man does of their condition.

Minerva has repeatedly stated that the eternal, unlimited power of God is pure electricity; not, however, electricity such as man knows it, for the Father is, in Himself, the Perfection of electric power, while man is only acquainted with it in its very crudest and debased form. From my own experiences in the spiritworld, also, I am prepared to substantiate Minerva's statement that the spiritworld is an electric world and that spirits are electric forms.

Let us now briefly review the grounds we have for justifying the conclusion that the spiritworld is an

electric world and spirits electric forms, for once establish this as a fact, as far as man's limited intelligence and opportunities will allow, then it becomes an easy matter to prove that God's power is electric power.

Man himself, in his present material limitation, can prove almost beyond a doubt that spirits are electric forms. Now what experience does man possess of spirits? The evidence he has at hand is not positive evidence in the strictest sense of the word, but it is negative evidence of such a convincing nature as to amount to strong positive evidence. This negative testimony makes itself manifest through the human brain in no uncertain manner, for this is the only channel through which it can possibly operate.

The human brain is composed entirely of matter, and no matter, wherever found and in whatever form, is capable of originating a thought or an idea, hence the human brain is no more able to originate a thought than the table upon which I am writing is able to invent a flying-machine; nevertheless, the brain is the source from which man, materially speaking, derives all his thoughts.

Whence, then, does man receive all his evil thoughts as well as good ones? Certainly not originally from a material source, consequently it must be from an immaterial one. For ages man has been taught that the evil are confined in hell, under a grim chief called the Devil;—expunging this latter as being a distinct personality, for herein it is conclusively proved that there is in truth no such existence. For ages, also, man has been taught that he was tempted by evil, which he now knows to be a fact; therefore, if evil spirits are confined in hell, and from such place they tempt man, then the earth must necessarily be in hell. Thus man is brought into immediate contact with evil, quite independent of what Minerva has taught; still, he never sees evil spirits, nor hears them, nor feels them in the ordinary acceptation of these terms. Notwithstanding this negative testimony,

man, through his brain, is most assuredly impressed by evil thoughts, and as a result of this prompting commits evil deeds. To Minerva, and to her alone, is man indebted for the explanation of the means by which this is effected, and now that he is acquainted with the exact process, reason and common sense step in and coincide with the explanation given. A similar process also takes place with good impressions as well as with inspirations, hence he has indisputable testimony that such promptings are, both from the invisible sources whence they originate and from the intangible method of their transmission, more akin to electric communications than any other with which he is acquainted.

Now what are my own experiences to justify me in arriving at the conclusion that spirits are electric forms, and the spiritworld an electric world? My spiritual body is not composed of matter—that is certain! It is invisible to my material eyes; it is intangible; it does not hear in the material sense, and no language of sound is in vogue. When in the spiritworld my spiritual body must necessarily be connected with my brain, and this connection is undeniably electric in its nature. My spiritual body can travel millions of miles in the fraction of a second, exactly corresponding, though in a much higher degree, with the rapidity with which man full well knows that electric messages are transmitted through a material medium. I converse in currents of information which are essentially highly electric in their nature. I feel, not by actual contact, but by electric currents of sympathy, or the reverse, and my vision power is also electric in its nature, but of such a high order as to be completely beyond my understanding. Everything I see in the spiritworld forcibly impresses me that a power is there in vogue purely electric in its nature, but exceedingly advanced beyond electricity as man knows it. Take, for instance, that stationary power I observed in the First¹ Sphere, which collects all currents of irregularity committed in its vicinity, and transmits the same to an

angel in the Sixth Sphere, millions upon millions, and millions of millions of miles away ;—in every respect this exhibits the employment of powerful and refined electricity. The various currents I feel, the boundary currents which restrict spirits to their proper spheres, and the knowledge I have of laws in operation in the spiritworld which can only be applicable to a general electric condition—all make me fully convinced that spirits are most certainly electric forms, and the spiritworld an electric world.

My grounds, then, for coming to the above conclusion are, first of all, and by far the most convincing, that the powerful and learned angel Minerva—man's greatest friend and benefactor—says and proves that such is the case ; secondly, that man himself has ample testimony of this fact ; and lastly, from my own remarkable experiences and investigations I am fully persuaded that Minerva's teachings in this respect are beyond dispute.

Whence do spirits obtain their electric power ? Every man upon earth is inspired through his conscience—through the operation of the Holy Ghost—that his soul is eternal. All those who exercise faith admit this to the extent of the privileges allowed them ; all those who are wishful to exercise faith, if only they were called upon to believe something in keeping with reason as well as faith, and for whose sake especially Minerva has been sent, are more or less impressed by this fact ; and all those who will not exercise faith are, or have been, instinctively prompted in a similar manner, but for several clearly defined reasons they refuse to take any notice of this mental impression.

To those two classes only who are satisfied that their souls are eternal I am addressing myself. If such, then, be the case, each eternal soul consists of a power, a life, and a knowledge of what eternity is. It is manifest, however, that the life sent upon earth has no eternal power of its own, nor yet does it possess any knowledge of what the eternal condition is. This life, when about to

begin its career in the spiritworld, is compelled to leave behind the material body or power which it possessed upon earth, but it is given a spiritual or electric body in order to make it existable in the spiritworld, as well as to prevent it from being drawn to its other own eternal properties ; and it is also given power to enable it to work out its atonement.

Whence, then, do spirits obtain this power ? From God, for He alone possesses All Power in the universe. So, then, if spirits derive their power from God, and if this said power which they possess is electric in its nature, gradually advancing to the perfect condition, it necessarily follows that God's power is electric power.

Electric power of which the Father is the eternal, perfect, and unlimited essence

Christ says : " I can of mine own self do nothing." " All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," clearly indicating that He was entirely dependent upon some one else for power.

" Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory." What do these terms mean ? " The Kingdom " includes more than the kingdom of heaven. Heaven is God's dwelling-place, whence the Father—the Omnipotent Power—never departs. Heaven is the particular region where the Perfection of the Power is concentrated, but the Power is eternal, perfect, and unlimited, hence permeates all space, which also must be eternal, unlimited. Therefore, wherever the Power is there also is the Kingdom, hence the Father's Kingdom comprises the whole universe ;—it is an eternal, unlimited kingdom.

" The Power " is the Father, and the Father is the greatest part of the Godhead, and the Father is God. The Power, if eternal, and perfect eternally, can only be of one nature ; hence, being such, nothing is impossible with God.

This Omnipotent Power created everything that is created, and that which is created is placed under tem-

porary or what are called natural laws, which laws are not applicable to eternal conditions—*hence the act of creating comes under eternal laws applicable to Omnipotence only*,—of which all men and all spirits in every sense of the word are, and will remain, totally ignorant. When Christ, therefore, appeared to His disciples in a room where the doors were shut, being possessed of All Power, *unlimited*, He called into operation certain eternal laws, and under such laws He made unseen and eternal elements temporarily assume a visible and material form.

“The Glory” is the Eternal Perfection. It is the concentrated essence of electric power in all its unlimited, perfect branches :—power is brightness, and perfect power and perfect brightness are Glory !

Such is Heaven, God’s dwelling-place ; and to return thither was Christ’s one great yearning when upon earth ; and such also is the resting-place awaiting each eternal soul who in the eternity of the past was loving and obedient to the Omnipotent Power, and who thus in consequence was foreknown, predestinated, and elected :—known to be good before time was hence eternally good, consequently destined for salvation before he underwent the temporary test, and elected as having the brand of Faith and the Power of the Holy Ghost upon him.*

* Elsewhere this entire subject will be more exhaustively treated.

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PART II

CHAPTER I

TYPES OF FRIVOLOUS SPIRITS

November 28, 1902.—With the examination of the two evil philosophers my investigations into the actual presence of spiritual occupants in the First Sphere, with their various habits of life, were brought to a close.

Whatever erratic theories my last subject may have deduced from his careful inquiries into the spiritual conditions existing in the various worlds which he had visited, he had, at any rate, pointedly drawn my attention to the almost unlimited number of worlds which this First Sphere contains.

Both my late acquaintances had probably been for years wandering from world to world, investigating and comparing them. They were practically only beginning their work, and such an idea as visiting them all had never really been definitely entertained by them.

Man is simply overwhelmed when he attempts seriously to consider this unfathomable proposition. His mind literally refuses to approach the subject; his thoughts cannot rise to the occasion, and his language is totally deficient in terms sufficiently adequate to embody any ideas which may possibly flash through his brain.

And what does all this go to prove?—this testimony from God's enemies, and from opponents to His rule? Surely through it all the bulk of mankind will be able to detect the eternal omniscience and omnipotence of a perfectly just God? Surely it will tend to clear up in the

human mind the difference between a material and an eternal condition? Let man cast up his eyes into the heavens and reflect that there are many millions of worlds, inhabited now and for ages past by innumerable millions of souls, each world ordained, supervised, and controlled by an Unlimited Power?—that all animal and vegetable life is created and sustained by the same Power?—that all inanimate creation, wheresoever found and in whatsoever form, is part of this Eternal Power?—and that not a thought, nor a word, nor an action, nor a secret, past, present, or to come, in all this animate creation, nor a particle, nor a form, nor a condition in all this inanimate creation, but is perfectly known by this Eternal, Unlimited Power? Such is Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence! and such is the Father! Let no man in future, therefore, dare even to compare eternal power and material power, for no imperfect existence can ever estimate or fathom what Perfect and Unlimited Power is!

I again stood before Minerva after an interval of two months—two months of complete rest and respite from spiritual influence. To my astonishment and satisfaction I found myself possessed of better control over my spiritual properties than on any preceding occasion. I was in the spiritworld in excellent presence, but when I came to utilise the connection with my material body, then I discovered how dull my brain was at receiving impressions. Disuse had rendered it in certain centres somewhat dim and impenetrable. Exercise was what was required to arouse it to the importance of the occasion, and enable it to realise that it was no longer a dormant faculty.

When I first assumed my spiritual form I was received and welcomed by Louisa, whose duty it now was to conduct me across the abyss, for Marian, whose office this had been in the past, had now been promoted to a higher mission, although still directly in connection with this work

First of all I satisfied myself that I was really in spiritual

form near Louisa ; this done, we both slowly and deliberately glided towards Minerva's presence. Minerva, as her usual custom is, awaited our arrival in calm dignity. She immediately welcomed me in the ordinary spiritual fashion, then forthwith I bent my gaze around as in the past. Yes, everything was unchanged ; the same feeling of peace and harmony pervaded me, and space, with its exhilarating and balmy influence, was just as attractive as ever—indeed, more so.

Minerva then stated that she would communicate with me upon matters of importance after I had exercised my spiritual powers somewhat, so she bid me go with Marian for a short journey with this object in view. Marian, who was at Minerva's right side and facing me as well, at once approached me and we set out together. Slowly we moved away, conversing as we went. I then advanced in front of her, and drank in with fervour the delight of being actually free from a material body, and in space. I concentrated my attention into the act of gazing upwards into the immeasurable heights, then downwards—just the same, unfathomable, unlimited, and nothing visible save the mysterious light of space.

This light of space, I am fully satisfied, is not really light such as man on earth is accustomed to. To the spiritual power of vision it is that demonstration of light which marks the boundary between the light of faith and goodness and the shadiness of evil power.

The above is the best definition of the light of space that can be given so as to be acceptable to man. It is a condition which favours neither of these powers, but is a light of its own, natural to space, and incomprehensible to material man.

In my earnest examination of this condition, which I must call light, I wandered in a somewhat erratic course, for when I suddenly recollected that I had a companion and turned in the direction where I expected that I had left her, I found, somewhat to my surprise, that she was below me, and considerably more to my left than I looked

for. Marian I instinctively knew had not moved, hence it was evident that in my eagerness to examine space and its attractions I had advanced in directions somewhat out of keeping with my then spiritual nature. The fact that I had done such a thing puzzled me somewhat at first, but I finally came to the conclusion that it must have been due to the very material, almost clumsy, way I had of investigating something that absorbed my whole attention, with sudden movements to examine from different stand-points a condition that was almost or quite beyond my comprehension. It also clearly proved to me that I had not yet mastered the various properties of my spiritual body.

At the sight of Marian I was struck with the desire to satisfy my inquiring mind whether distance had any effect upon the size of a spirit, so I backed slowly, ever keeping my gaze intently fixed upon her. As the distance between us gradually increased, so in like degree did the form of Marian insensibly grow smaller, until nothing but a bright little speck was seen. So far I was satisfied upon this point, and returned to Marian to inquire of her if such were also the case to her vision. The answer I received corroborated what I had proved for myself, so that now I was assured that the atmosphere of space, in this respect, produced exactly the same result in a spiritual sense as the molecular atmosphere around the earth does in a material one.

We both returned to Minerva, for now I was quite ready to hear what instructions she had to communicate to me upon the renewal of my spiritual labours.

I was before her, facing her as usual, then the other members of this mission mechanically and gracefully glided into their various positions. The entire operation was one of momentary performance, and I glanced all around to take in the situation as best I could, to satisfy the cravings of a curious mind.

What I beheld impressed my spiritual form as being a most harmonious spectacle, therefore I shall endeavour

to describe it. Minerva was facing me, being on a somewhat higher level than myself, and distant, as far as I can estimate, about one hundred feet; she was in a thoughtful attitude, as one who is anxious to explain something of importance. Her large and powerful form was grand to behold; her figure was a mass of brightness, and everything about her conveyed the impression of exalted intelligence, dignity, and power. Marian occupied her usual position upon my left side, about twenty-five feet apart from me, and almost the same distance from Minerva as myself. Louisa was to my right side and behind, perhaps fifty feet away. The stranger was behind me about two hundred feet, and upon a higher base.

Such was the scene around me; impossible for the human mind to grasp the reality. It was picturesque in the extreme, composed as it was of all bright and powerful spirits, happy beyond measure, and anxious to progress upwards and onwards.

I now concentrated my whole attention upon Minerva, who, being upon a higher plane than myself, thus necessitated my looking up to her. She began in slow and measured currents of information, so that my brain had no difficulty in receiving and comprehending her meaning.

"Well, sir, I welcome you here again to continue your labours in this world. You have now reached such a stage in your knowledge of spirit life that we are in a position to begin seriously to study spiritual conditions from a standpoint which will explain to man the process through which he himself will inevitably be called upon to pass. However, it is not for this purpose only that information is being imparted to him, but also especially for his future material advancement, so that his enlightenment in this respect may equal that which he exhibits in other departments of life, and thus give an impetus to still more rapid progress in the future. To attain this latter object, which we have at present more particularly in view, man must first be made acquainted with spiritual

existences and their works, as well as the powers which they employ ; and the classifications of spirits must be explained, otherwise he would fail to realise the vastness of the spiritworld.

“ We have already examined a few spirits from this the First Sphere, but it must be clearly understood that all spirits confined in this region for time, until the separation is effected, are evil, or possess certain eternal properties which are not attributes of goodness but the opposite. Some are evil in one direction only, others are generally so. The difference between one extreme and the other is almost unlimited, hence the various classifications are well-nigh beyond my power of comprehension.

“ There are very many worlds inhabited by souls undergoing the test ; but because one world is populated by distinct types of souls, no definite conclusion must be drawn that all worlds are similarly peopled. If such were the case that all eternal souls, possessing an unlimited variety of unchangeable properties, were indiscriminately mixed under conditions such as man is placed under, then not only would it be impossible for them to exist in common, but it would also be an existence out of which the tortured soul would emerge in a condition which the Father in His knowledge and wisdom foresaw would not be consistent with the requirements He had exacted to effect the separation. Compatibility of eternal properties is, therefore, carefully observed by Omniscience in classifying souls together on various worlds. Thus it follows that there are uncountable numbers of classifications which man in his present state knows absolutely nothing about ; indeed, he cannot realise that such properties do actually exist, so remarkable are some of them.

“ There is no necessity for us to enter into a minute consideration of the various classifications, for man in the limited state of his privileges is not capable of thoroughly understanding them. The power of evilness

we will therefore recognise as the one controlling all those types under the various combinations opposed to goodness, for you understand, sir, that the purpose of your visits here is solely to obtain a superficial knowledge of the general nature and conduct of the spiritworld.

“The frivolous type we will now consider. The word ‘frivolous’ is perhaps not the correct one, still it is more appropriate in its application to this class of spirits than any other word. By frivolous spirits I mean those souls who are totally devoid of ambition, who neither do good nor yet harm, and who make no effort whatever to advance towards perfection, nor yet can they lapse into evil.

“Frivolous spirits are all confined in the Second Sphere, and although an extremely large class in themselves, still they occupy but a very limited portion of that immense region. They are perfectly content and happy in their present condition, without ever thinking about the future, and are always in search of pleasure and amusement. Some of them possess what may be termed frivolous ambition, but it is ambition which leads them afield only to return none the wiser, for their properties are too trifling and insincere to urge them on with determination towards any definite goal. Dilatory spirits are here also ; they are not able to concentrate their ambitions sufficiently for advancement, hence they are not the class whom God has chosen to dwell with Him. This latter type comprises spirits who, as a matter of fact, have not developed the power of faith to a degree that will permit of progress. These and many other kinds are confined in the Second Sphere solely on account of their frivolousness, hence the term ‘frivolous’ is very comprehensive in its embrace, and includes all those spirits who, either from one cause or another, are neither good nor evil, faithful nor faithless.

“Among other classes of spirits who inhabit the Second Sphere are faithless spirits with ambition, but these are not long in passing beyond this region of rest and do

nothing. Faithful spirits placed in this sphere in order to learn the ways of the spiritworld frequently are raised into the next one very quickly. No spirits in the Second Sphere work missions originating directly from Heaven, but they always pass beyond it into the Third Sphere before atonement begins.

“Many spirits in this sphere have ambitions of their own which they are constantly striving to develop, while others are appointed by spirits of higher degree to do unimportant work.

“Thus the Second Sphere is composed of more classes than can ever be appreciated, for in this respect it is the most complicated of all the spheres, inhabited as it is by numberless souls from all the worlds in God’s universe. We shall subsequently question a few from various classes in that sphere, in order to enable man to realise the difference that exists between an electric world under God’s laws and a material world handed over to man to be ruled by him, but ordered and supervised by God.

“The Second Sphere is the basis from which all spiritual advancement and atonement begins. The distinct differences between the First Sphere and this one are clearly defined. One is greatly in advance of the other, and spirits are located in each for certain distinct reasons, therefore the conditions in evidence and the proclivities of the various inhabitants are totally different in each sphere, for all spirits work or pass their existence solely as their desires manifest themselves. They are free to exercise their own will, hence those who have faith will through faith and their own endeavours eventually reach heaven, and those who are faithless will by degrees attain to different limits, that to which each one ultimately reaches being his own idea of what perfection is. Thus every spirit in due course will arrive at his own particular standard, beyond which none have ambitions, for all, through their severally unchangeable instincts, have then reached the parallel of their eternal properties.

“These different classes of spirits do not mix in common,

but all separate classes associate only with their equals. Thus is the spiritworld ordered, so that all in time will attain to what is to each one perfect happiness. The Godhead will then return to them their dormant eternal properties, and it will be found that each individual standard arrived at corresponds exactly with the standard aspired to by the restored eternal properties. The separation will then have been accomplished, and those who have reached, and will reach, the required standard will dwell in heaven with the Father, where all are equal, for all have gained the reward previously decided upon. Those who do not attain to this position will be judged and located where they will be happy by themselves, for the ultimate intention is that happiness such as each individual soul selects for himself shall be the lot of all. Thus do the great love and justice of the Father manifest themselves.

“ In conclusion, sir, I trust from my remarks you realise that this world is a thousand times more complicated than the one from which you come.

“ Now with regard to the programme I have determined upon ; it is that we shall first of all question a few spirits from the Second Sphere, whom I shall procure and bring to you for examination. You shall then visit the Second Sphere, and gather whatever information you are capable of grasping. And now, sir, what I have said to you is sufficient for this occasion, so you may retire to your body whenever you choose.”

Here Minerva bid me adieu, and vanished.

The authoritative tone in which this charge was delivered held us all spell-bound, and none seemed willing to break the binding. Minerva had gone, and there we all remained motionless and speechless. At last Marian broke the charm by asking me a question. Not much was said, however, and we decided to return slowly to my body, for this was my first visit after a considerable rest from spiritual labours. It was really the case that we—Marian, Louisa, and myself—returned slowly, for it was

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some time after we commenced to move towards my body that we arrived at the region around the earth infested by evil spirits. My gaze was intently fixed upon them, as we now threaded our way through their dense masses—a spectacle I had never previously witnessed so deliberately and so thoroughly. Gradually we approached nearer and nearer to the earth, until the very atmosphere grew darker, clogged up by the presence of evil.

At last I reached my body and looked at it musingly ; then I entered it, thinking all the while how very unnatural and degrading it was to be compelled to descend from spirit to man, from freedom to subjection with all its concomitant limitations.

November 29.—Next night I was again before Minerva and her assistants, full of hope and expectation. As usual, after our salutations had been duly performed, I journeyed around to refresh my spiritual properties, but whilst thus occupied I was suddenly overcome by an irresistible desire to retrace my steps. We returned, and immediately I found myself facing Minerva, who was now prepared to explain a few points to me.

The positions we occupied were much the same as upon my last interview with her, but probably Minerva herself was not quite so far removed from me. I was now ready to listen to what she had to say, but from her appearance and attitude I was instinctively aware that her observations would be very short as compared with what they had been upon my previous visit. She began :

“ Upon this occasion, sir, it will be your duty to question these two spirits whom I have selected and brought here for this purpose.” Here Minerva directed my attention towards two spirits who were in attendance, far away in the background. They did not appear to be under any direct control of the stranger spirit, nor yet did they make any attempt to escape, but whether they were present willingly or by compulsion I could not then find out.

“ These two spirits, sir,” Minerva resumed, “ are

frivolous spirits with frivolous desires. They are from that class I recently described to you, and are true types of it. They are both from the Second Sphere, from which they cannot possibly ever advance. You will not be long in recognising them from their properties, ideas, and occupations ; and when you have heard what they have to say you will readily understand why they cannot make headway. You are not able to question these spirits directly, for their ideas are not in keeping with your own, so then, as you are limited to your brain's way of viewing things, it will be necessary for Marian to interrogate them for you and interpret their answers in conformity with your questions."

Minerva then withdrew to my left side, when one of the spirits was simultaneously brought in front of me by the stranger. Marian forthwith advanced towards this spirit and took him under her power ; then the interview began.

The plan adopted in the interrogation of this spirit was slightly different from the method had recourse to in the past. I did not directly ask my subject questions, with Marian to interpret them into spiritual idiom, but I explained to her any subject upon which I desired answers, and she, knowing to what extent it was necessary to investigate it, extracted from my informant such information as she was satisfied would come well within the range of my comprehension.

This new method was distinctly more satisfactory to myself, for all that was required of me was to think of a subject and state the same to Marian. To some of my questions, thus put, the answers were long, and embraced a considerable amount of information, while to others, nothing definite was received in reply.

The first subject upon which I requested Marian to obtain all possible information was concerning the occupation and interests of this spirit.

The answer came quickly, and contained much news, of which the following is the gist :

This spirit was one who seldom or never left his abode, but was constantly engaged in it amusing himself in what I should call spiritual society. He was well versed in all the branches of spiritual gossip, and evidently not reluctant to retail it. A kind of friendly rivalry existed among all the spirits of his particular clique (type), and my subject was seemingly one who persistently endeavoured to outdo his spiritual companions in such pastimes as spirits indulge in, but the nature of these particular diversions was more than I could grasp. This was his occupation and enjoyment, and had been his one attraction ever since entering the spiritworld. So strong, indeed, were his sentiments in this respect that he could not imagine any engagement more satisfactory and profitable than the one in which he was occupied. He was happy, aye, extremely happy and contented with his present mode of life, and not for a moment would he think of such a thing as associating with any outside his class.

The next question I submitted to Marian was : How is it that this spirit is so content with his present position when he must constantly see spirits and angels both brighter and more powerful than himself ? What are his views upon such matters, as well as about the Omnipotent Father, also about the powers of evil ?

This spirit, during his long occupancy of his present abode, had of course seen very many spirits, some of higher order than himself and some of lower, but he had not the remotest curiosity even to inquire anything about them. There were such vast numbers of spirits of all classes that he had long since ceased to take any notice of them ;—if they were happy he was happy, and that was surely enough. His present occupation required his entire attention, and so deeply engrossed was he in it that he had not time to devote to anything else. Concerning the existence of a Supreme Power, he did not deny the possibility of there being such a Power, neither did he admit the fact that there was one. Complete

indifference concerning the Godhead, and everything that pertained to a governing power was manifest in his answer, and he led me to understand that in the circle with which he was associated such a subject was never discussed nor even approached. As to evilness, or evil souls existing, he saw no reason why they should not exist ; they had as much right to live as any other class of spirits ; indeed, he was fully satisfied in his own mind that all spirits of all the different classes had pronounced weaknesses except those who belonged to his own class. This was a generally recognised fact among his set. He viewed the spiritual existence from an aspect in which he considered that his own system of living was the only one from which supreme happiness could accrue, and as to knowledge, that of course was left to those who deliberately searched after it, but individually he was not curious about anything he could not explain. To the best of his recollection he had lived in his present abode a very long time indeed. He scarcely knew what to expect of the future, for many well-informed spirits of his own class had foretold all kinds of changes and new conditions in the future, but he himself could not realise that there would be any break in the present happy life he spent. He had not the faintest remembrance from which material world he had come, for everything in connection with worlds or their inhabitants had long since passed out of his thoughts ; indeed, as a matter of fact, he had not travelled beyond the limits of his sphere for an unknown length of time. Concerning the nature of the amusements which afforded him such intense pleasure, I could learn nothing about them further than that they were essentially of a spiritual order. Evidently my brain could not accept anything beyond the bare facts that amusements and pastimes, free from interruption by any influences whatever, were enjoyed by this particular class of spirits, whose whole existence was literally absorbed in them.

This spirit was ignorant and depraved, yet he con-

sidered himself a typical sample of perfection. His sole ambition was to gratify self. He had no faith, hence could never improve and advance, and so far removed was he from the possibility of such a thing ever happening that he considered all ideas apart from his own were entirely wrong and based upon some want somewhere.

In appearance this spirit was bright, but of a dull brightness. The inner figure was stately and trim, yet wherein such features lay I cannot correctly explain. His entire form was typical of the peculiar lustre of frivolousness:—the difference in brightness between faithful and frivolous spirits is as that between electric light and gas-light, but, although such a comparison may be drawn, still it must not be inferred that these latter lights in any sense resemble the former.

All information worth having had now been obtained from this spirit, for he was quite ignorant upon any topics outside his regular attractions, so I released him only to vanish almost immediately, no doubt in a hurry to return to his endless pastime.

The next subject was then conducted in front of me, ready for examination. Marian secured him, and the stranger retired a short distance into the background.

There was a pause, during which I took a general survey of my subject. In appearance he closely resembled the previous spirit, and in advancement he was just about on a par with him. His inner figure suggested activity, and his features that of jovial satisfaction, but I could detect that in his ambitions and attainments he was of a type quite distinct from our late acquaintance.

Marian then turned to me and stated that this spirit was different in many respects from the previous one examined, but essentially of the same general order; that he was an intelligent spirit, but that his intelligence was overweighted by frivolous desires. She further intimated that probably upon examination he would afford us somewhat greater satisfaction than my late

subject, for no doubt his aspirations were of a higher nature.

I then requested Marian to examine him upon the subject of the Powers which overrule the spiritworld.

I watched my subject intently, but could not detect that any communication was passing between him and Marian, then almost immediately the latter turned to me and imparted such information as she had obtained from him. Altogether I was considerably the wiser for my interview with this spirit, and learned several things which he considered right from his point of view. He confessed to the fact that he was not faithful, nor yet could he be correctly called faithless. He was quite devoid of evil intention, and from his remarks it was evident that he was not doing any harm in his simple but good-for-nothing existence. His whole attention and interest seemed to be absorbed in his calling, and he was particular to mix only with those spirits of his equals with whom he could discuss subjects that had some bearing upon works which interested and, at the same time, puzzled them. He had evidently travelled extensively through the various parts of his sphere, ever gratifying his desires and obtaining great satisfaction from gazing upon spiritual scenes, probably giving advice here and discussing some subject of interest at his next halting-place. Further, I gathered that he was an expert at spiritual amusements, a musician, a favourite entertainer; he may also have been a promoter of harmony, sympathy, and concord, or a leader in some special and interesting pastime.

He was of the opinion that it was by no means certain that his world was governed by a Supreme Power, but whether it was or was not mattered little to spirits, as it did not concern their peace and happiness whichever was the case.

Among his acquaintances were some spirits who told of a great disturbance in that world in the far distant past. Many followed one theory, many inclined to other

views, but generally the disturbance ended in all spirits having different opinions of their own in this matter. Numberless classes of spirits sprung up in consequence, but only those who took no notice of this disturbance were left in peace ; this condition they have enjoyed ever since, and will continue to do so until some fresh settlement takes place.*

My subject also implicitly believed that in course of time a change was bound to take place in order to settle their differences, for all had been compelled to leave their own abode and come here by reason of this disturbance, which was still unadjusted, but that as soon as everything was amicably arranged they would, without doubt, return to their old home. The particular class to which he belonged were those who had not troubled themselves about such matters, so that of course they would naturally be the first to be entitled to return ; this restoration must necessarily be effected at some time, but not yet, he thought.

This was probably one of the theories which thoughtful, frivolous spirits of this class recognised, but with callous indifference to the meaning of it all. The position they occupied was one which neither professed belief or otherwise in anything beyond their immediate circle of interest, which, from a spiritual standpoint, solely amounted to selfishness.

He did not trouble himself to recollect much about the world upon which he had been subjected, and regarded his sojourn there as in some way connected with this disturbance in the past, which now that it was over was of no consequence to him.

Among his friends he occupied a prominent position, and was a very popular acquaintance, taking a leading part in their various amusements, much to the delight

* This disturbance, without doubt, has reference to Christ's ascent into the one region inhabited by all passed-over souls waiting for His coming, and preaching to them faith in The Godhead.

of all, and occasionally changing from amusement to discussion upon subjects exclusively known to members of his own set.

More than this was beyond my power to grasp, so that what really constitutes amusement to this class of spirits is essentially connected with their spiritual life, and of an order incomprehensible to the human brain. Still, most certainly they do have amusements, and these amusements are eternally attractive to all.

Fresh arrivals who constantly came into their midst, if they had any theories at all of their own and ever attempted to obtrude them, were very soon made to realise that the opinions of the older inhabitants were the ones which alone would be tolerated, and all who refused to abide by them, or continued to assert ideas of their own, were treated with summary jurisdiction, and forthwith expelled from their midst.

My subject sometimes traversed the First Sphere merely to diversify the nature of his amusement, and from his own confession he did most certainly obtain gratification from these visits, but as to forming any opinions about evil spirits—the reasons why they were shut off by themselves, and the conditions under which they lived—such a preposterous idea had never entered into his mind.

He rarely visited any of the material worlds, for the undertaking was much too fatiguing and worrying, and the amusement to be obtained was not of a nature in keeping with his elevated taste.

The sum and substance of this examination thoroughly revealed the fact that the spirit in front of me was an easy-going, lazy soul, absorbed in pleasure and diversion, and one who in no sense of the word troubled himself about theories and doctrines—a typical example of what Minerva terms a frivolous spirit.

The examination was over and he was released, possibly greatly fatigued by the interview, for he instantly disappeared, no doubt in a hurry to return to his sphere, there to recuperate his exhausted power.

Minerva now came forward and conversed with me concerning the two spirits whom I had just examined. They were, she informed me, frivolous spirits in the full meaning of the word. They were too much wrapped up in their inferior senses to allow their ambitions to carry them upwards ; they were harmless to the last degree, and absolutely content in their present existence. They had no expectations whatever of obtaining any advanced position and increased power, for now they had reached the level of their eternal properties.

Here Minerva bowed to me in parting, then forthwith vanished, and I lost no time in repairing to my body, for I was much exhausted.

Every item of information received from these two spirits was certainly very frivolous. I experienced great difficulty in understanding electric currents conveying such light and trivial information, and I am greatly indebted to Marian for the careful and pronounced way in which she impressed me with such points as were tangible enough for me to assimilate.

Without doubt Minerva was correct when she informed me that I was unequal to the task of questioning this type of spirit, for most assuredly if I had done so the attempt would not have been a success, for my condition is limited to a material brain. Evil spirits undeniably have ambitions, and in the majority of instances very pronounced ones too, although perverted, therefore my brain could the more readily appreciate their doings, but these, such as I have just interviewed, were in every sense of the word frivolous.

November 30.—Next evening I again assumed my spiritual entity, and without delay stood facing Minerva, prepared to question such spirits as she had selected for that purpose.

Minerva intimated that the two spirits whom I should now examine were in all respects frivolous, but their proclivities led them in quite another direction from that in which my subjects of yesterday indulged both

their time and attention. Their habits and occupations were different, evincing a tinge of ambition, hence they were a step in advance.

As soon as Minerva had made these few remarks, and retired to my left side, a spirit was before me in charge of the stranger. Marian then advanced, and, according to custom, took the subject under her charge, but I noticed that upon this occasion she remained nearer to me, on my left and in front, than she generally did.

I cast a searching glance at this new witness, intent upon reading his character. He was just such another form as my last two acquaintances. His true figure was invisible, but enveloped in a light which, in comparison to the brightness of a faithful spirit, was yellow in colour. This particular shade of brightness did not radiate far from the internal figure, hence it presented to my vision a much smaller object than did the form of the stranger who was there escorting him.

Marian now turned to me and said : "Sir, this spirit is one of that type who habitually frequent worlds, and tease the inhabitants in whatever way they can find the greatest amusement. You are already generally acquainted with the methods they adopt, hence I need say no more."

I then asked her to question this subject, and obtain such information as I was capable of understanding upon the peculiar occupation which interested him so much.

The interview then began, and the stranger immediately retired behind our group, where I saw him in attendance upon another spirit, who most probably was wondering what was going to happen.

Soon Marian had received from him all the particulars which this question called for, and turned to me to interpret. The answer conveyed the intelligence that my subject was much devoted to this particular vocation, and had great expectations of acquiring rare skill in the art of teasing, to such an extent as to annoy, whomsoever he came across in a material condition. This was the sum total of my friend's aspirations, and the zenith of his

ambition—teasing and annoying mankind. The methods adopted and the various channels through which his ramifications operated upon man are quite unintelligible to the latter, as also is the knowledge of the great satisfaction such frivolous behaviour affords spirits of this type. Their ideas are so in keeping with their title that very trifling events and conditions in man afford them intense amusement ; indeed, they not infrequently bring about such events and conditions by the cunning way they have of influencing and working through material. The exact powers which these spirits bring to bear in their business are best understood by themselves, for it is beneath the dignity of advancing spirits to investigate into such trivial behaviour.

In answer to other questions I learned that this spirit frequently travelled from one world to another, from one region to another, returning to his sphere only to recoup himself with more power for future wanderings and recreations.

He had been in the Second Sphere a very long time—so long, indeed, that he could remember when there were, comparatively speaking, few souls in the spiritworld. He had never formed any opinion about the Supreme Power, or the reason for the division of souls into the various classes. His only desire at present was to master the particular study to which he had devoted all his uninterrupted attention for ages.

This certainly was a show of ambition, but without any beneficial result anywhere in view, for after all the eternal souls have passed through the test, and time is no more, he will be left without any occupation, and precisely where he was on first entering the spiritworld ; but the possibility of such a thing happening did not trouble him in the least. The wonders he saw on all sides never brought him to a standstill and made him reflect ; no ambitions or thoughts of the future ever forced themselves uppermost in his mind—his present gratification was his only consideration.

"This certainly is a worthy soul, Marian!" I exclaimed in utter contempt.

"Yes, sir," she replied. "This experience is not a very elevating one; the time is close at hand, however, when you will have a different verdict to give, but we must rise one step at a time in order that man may be systematically enlightened."

I set him at liberty, and can only infer from his actions what his thoughts were upon the entire interview, for no sooner was he free than he disappeared in space, probably to speed his flight to some unconscious human victim.

The second spirit was now in position confronting me, a distinctly different type I recognised at once, and one from whom I, at any rate, expected a measure of satisfaction. In some respects his appearance resembled that of his predecessor, but the stamp of intelligence upon it was more pronounced.

This was a learned frivolous spirit, so I was told, with his learning controlled by frivolous ambition. In his own estimation his business was a most important one, and, although frivolous in the extreme, still it was a source of great happiness to him. He may be appropriately called a calculating frivolous spirit, calculating everything he came across, regardless of the absurd and aimless nature of his employment; nevertheless, he firmly believed that he would ultimately achieve great things by a steady perseverance in his present vocation.

Of course he only associated with his equals, and as they were extremely ignorant, so it naturally followed that my subject with his phenomenal calculations was led to believe that he was an erudite scholar.

The information that was imparted to me I find very difficult to commit to writing, for the basis upon which his calculations were made was altogether new to the human brain, and can only be considered as showing frivolousness, as well as a faulty system of reckoning.

Amongst his numerous calculations was one upon the rate at which a certain division of spirits was gradually

becoming more powerful, and how long it would take this particular section to be numerically the most powerful of any separate combination of spirits in this sphere. This individual class was, of course, the one to which my informant belonged ; but his calculations extended further than this and unmistakably proved by his own showing that if the influx of new arrivals kept up at the steady pace of recent times a serious congestion of spirits would take place at their present abode, so that they would eventually be compelled to migrate to some new region where there would be sufficient room for them all to prosecute their several enjoyments without interruption.

He had another important calculation concerning the rate at which his own community was increasing, and it appeared to me, from what I could interpret of the answer, that a steady stream of souls from all the inhabited worlds, never slackening, but rather increasing, was constantly being added to their already huge numbers, This stream was flowing with such rapidity that my calculating friend estimated that if the souls comprising it were to collect together, and then rush in upon their own comrades of like eternal properties they would actually disturb their harmony.

This in written language seems very indefinite, and to the human mind appears almost meaningless, for neither time nor numbers were included in the reckoning, and no earthly calculating basis adopted. Still, when I heard it in my spiritual form it certainly appeared within the range of spiritual possibilities, for it must be remembered that there is no such thing as time to an immaterial existence, hence time could not possibly be a factor in arriving at the result.

He expounded several other such formulæ, all too complex for the human mind to grasp, for, indeed, his whole individuality was wrapped up in abstruse studies of an order that no man could either understand or appreciate. That these calculations were essentially

frivolous, and led to no ultimate benefit, I freely admit, still, at the same time I do not consider they were nonsense, but were quite in keeping with his ambition, his knowledge, and his position ; for it must not be forgotten that all such ignorant spirits as these imagine themselves in every respect to be at the very pinnacle of perfection, and from this position they view and criticise all other souls ; it is, then, from such a basis as this that my mathematical friend made all his calculations.

The information which this frivolous genius possessed he seemed most willing to impart to me, for without a doubt he was very proud of it. His ignorance was profound in every respect save in this one direction, for he never made the least attempt to acquire knowledge, viewing with a certain amount of contempt any attainment apart from that which he himself possessed.

I do not think it necessary to record other calculations which my subject had made, for they were all based upon similar lines, and quite out of keeping with the system rational to man ; therefore, when I discovered that the resources of this frivolous expert were exhausted, I dismissed him and returned to my body, there to see what deductions I could make out of such advanced arithmetic.

CHAPTER II

THE WORLD "THEOCEESE"

December 1.—Again I transported my immaterial properties into their spiritual form and crossed the unfathomable abyss, and again I confronted Minerva prepared for work.

Our greetings over, and my customary exercise in space at an end, I was informed that a spirit was in attendance ready to be interviewed, and that, as he was of an essentially different class from the four previous witnesses, he would probably have something of interest to impart to me.

I was particularly struck by the earnestness of manner in Minerva on this occasion, although at all times she seems completely absorbed in her work, in her desire to obtain as much information for man as the very extraordinary channel through which it must necessarily be conveyed to him will allow.

Whenever she has work on hand with me she is always excessively anxious to begin operations, and have it completed as thoroughly as my power and brain properties will permit ; but, on the other hand, when there is no such urgency, she is ever ready to converse upon subjects more in keeping with my normal habits.

On this occasion she appeared to be more than usually desirous to commence at once, so on my return with Marian, after a somewhat prolonged indulgence in the bewildering enchantment of space, she reminded me that all were intent upon their duties as soon as I myself was prepared to question this spirit.

I replied that I was now quite ready to interview

whatever spirit she had procured, provided that I was capable of doing so.

“This spirit,” she began, “who is now in attendance for you to examine, is a faithful spirit, but lately passed over into this world. He is from the Second Sphere, and is waiting for a mission by which he may atone for his sins and shortcomings contracted during the material test, and so pave his way to Heaven. He hails from a different world from yours, and I have purposely selected him on that account. You are at liberty to interrogate him as you choose. You are able personally to put your questions to him, as he is an intelligent spirit and will understand you, and Marian shall act as interpreter and give you back his answers, which will require to be translated into a form acceptable to your brain. Perfect reliance may be placed upon all his statements, for in this world no influence exists to prompt a spirit to state anything that is not true. You had better begin without delay, for you will obtain a considerable amount of information from him which for our purpose will be valuable. Remember he is not a frivolous spirit, but one faithful to God.”

I replied that nothing would give me greater pleasure than forthwith to comply with her request, but I doubted my ability to do the work properly, for this was evidently a spirit who should be examined very carefully.

“Nay, sir ! If you cannot then, pray, who upon your earth can ? You are quite equal to the duty which you are being called upon to perform ; you are discharging it to my entire satisfaction, and I know probably better than any other spirit how extremely difficult is the nature of this business. The difference between spirit and man, when explaining the former to the latter, then becomes most apparent, and the same applies to you and your earthly work ; but when we are in a position to meet face to face and investigate the subject from its most approachable standpoint, then surely we have in a great measure solved the riddle ! ”

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"Yes, Minerva ; but where the difficulty and disappointment is most felt is upon my return to my material body, there to find only small fragments of the information obtained here collected by my brain, and having to express these fragments in human language."

"Not really more difficult, sir, than the concentration of your power necessary to enable you to be present here."

"Possibly not, Minerva, but the responsibility is then the greatest."

"Well, sir, we cannot at present dwell upon your condition, but let it suffice when I again remind you that you are discharging your work in every respect up to my expectation. Now, sir, you may begin the examination."

Minerva then gracefully and slowly moved to my left side and assumed her usual position and attitude. The stranger at once came forward from the background escorting a spirit and placed him before me, remaining in attendance himself, perhaps twenty-five feet in front of me. Marian, who was now at my left side, advanced and occupied her customary position as interpreter. The subject was then secured under her control, and the stranger forthwith retired considerably to the rear and resumed his position of attention. Louisa was to my right and behind, apparently only a spectator to these supernatural proceedings, but in reality discharging some important function in connection with my brain.

The subject of this interview being now in position I bent my attention earnestly upon him, but whether or not he was aware of the intense curiosity with which I surveyed him I cannot say. He was a moderately bright spirit, considerably more so than the frivolous representatives whom I had but recently questioned. There was a look of wonder in his countenance, evidently the result of astonishment at the new and marvellous sights he beheld in this region generally, for it must be remembered that he had not long been a resident in the spirit-world. He was not in the least surprised at the position he now occupied, or reluctant in volunteering information,

but rather seemed desirous of explaining conditions which he had now left behind him for ever.

I took a liking to this spirit the moment I beheld him. He was in just such a position as myself, with the exception that he had the advantage over me in that he was a complete spirit whereas I was only a composite one. He presented the appearance of an elderly gentleman with grey hair and beard, and there was nothing peculiar in his figure to distinguish him from any other spirit, his equal, who had spent his material life upon the earth ; in fact, there was nothing about him at all to indicate that he had not emanated from our earth, but according to his own explanations he most certainly had undergone his temporary subjection upon another world.

I could tell at once that he was a faithful spirit, for his brightness was both clear and intense,—not that the radius of this brightness was much greater than that of a frivolous spirit, but it was in the pureness and volume of it wherein the real difference lay.

We remained motionless for some time, closely observing each other ; not that such an act was out of place in this world, but rather, that it is an ordinary spiritual trait.

After satisfying that curiosity natural to the human mind I began the conversation, and the answer was returned immediately ; indeed, the communications eventually became so rapid that my brain could not frame words quickly enough to keep pace with them.

“ Well, sir,” I began, “ you are no doubt fully acquainted with the reason for your presence here ? ”

The response was given without the slightest hesitation, and conveyed to me the impression that I was now in communication with an educated being, fresh from a world different from the earth ; with one who thought before he spoke, and well remembered his experiences when in the flesh ; with one whose present existence was still quite an enigma to him, not one of disappointment, however, but the extreme opposite—astonishment at

the marvellous properties of the world he now dwelt in, and at the simple explanations before him of conditions which previously had been mysteries. I knew this instinctively from his first answer, for when it reached me I seemed momentarily to be in possession of his very inmost thoughts.

"Yes, I am quite aware," was his reply, "for I have been already informed of the nature of the interview awaiting me, and I earnestly sympathise with man in his quest after further knowledge."

"I understand that you are a new arrival in this world?"

"Yes, I have but recently crossed over, and am yet at a loss to realise the grandeur of everything around me."

"You are faithful to the Godhead, I have also been informed?"

"Certainly I am, and with tenfold more ambition now that the road to perfection is clearly exposed to view."

"From your present position, then, you can better comprehend the mysteries of eternal life?"

"Indeed, sir, it is jumping from mystery and doubt into fact and revelation! I am never tired of beholding the proofs, and am relieved and happy beyond all expectation."

"Do you know from what world you come?"

"Certainly, I know much about my old home, although I have no desire ever to return to or even visit it."

"Can you tell me the name by which the inhabitants recognised it?"

There was a pause, then the answer came—" 'Theoceese'; but as to the location of this world in the universe, in my present position I have no basis upon which to ground any explanation, therefore I cannot inform you; but this much I do know, that the world in whose vicinity we are at present (the earth) was not the one from which I came, for I naturally feel that its position is different."

He then informed me that from his world at times other worlds were visible, and numerous theories had been advanced in the past concerning these worlds ; that these theories were rudely shaken in latter days by new discoveries made, and that it was still a subject environed by obscurity and ignorance, so that any opinions at present entertained about them were recognised as mere speculations. This world received its light from other worlds or suns, and at times darkness was over certain parts of it, owing to the immense distances these illuminating powers were away.

From his remarks upon this subject I understood that light and darkness did not follow each other in regular rotation, but fluctuated according to the varying conditions and distances of these illuminating powers.

He went on to say that now he had lost all interest in these old studies. He had left all that behind, and did not miss any of his former habits, but, quickly assimilating himself into the ways of his new abode, had abandoned all past theories, and begun upon an entirely new basis to gather information. This occupation he found exceedingly engaging under the more advanced conditions, and he derived great satisfaction from his work. His knowledge was ever increasing faster and faster, for he fully recognised that it was impossible for him to appreciate what was awaiting him in the future unless he was in a position to value it at its real worth.

He had a good idea of the position in which man was placed, and he did his best to lay before me a picture of the world he had recently left behind, but he stated that now, as all interest in it had abated, he found it somewhat difficult to relate particulars with which he had been very familiar until a short time ago.

I questioned this extremely interesting and intelligent spirit to the best of my ability, and shall record his answers in the form of a running communication. This, indeed, is the only satisfactory way of explaining spiritual information, and the replies I received were presented

to my mind more in the form of a picture than an actual verbal response.

The subject first dwelt upon was the religion generally professed by the inhabitants of the world Theoceese.

My informant then began in a clear and succinct way to explain how this religion in the dark and ignorant days of the primitive inhabitants of this world had originated from vague and ill-defined theories ; how such theories were handed down by tradition to successive generations, slowly becoming more concrete and mysterious as further light was thrown in upon their gradually increasing intelligence ; how such light always had a spiritual origin, but invariably suffered adulteration, and got mixed up with contradictory assertions from inferior sources ; how it became a momentous study to the religiously inclined to think over and decide upon which course to adopt, and how each individual who was at all capable of exercising his own free will followed whatever direction his mental promptings suggested, so that some believed, others could not, some would not, others cared not, while others again strenuously endeavoured to realise the mysteries of a future life.

The religion taught recognised the existence of a Supreme Power ruling this universe. This Supreme Power, or God, was veiled in such mystery that the inhabitants, in their efforts to solve these mysteries, were divided into innumerable sects, each sect holding strong and distinct views upon this subject, so that when he left Theoceese religion had developed into a maze of mysteries making confusion worse confounded.

They knew full well the existence of a spiritworld, but so very limited were their ideas of its magnificence and importance that what they considered valuable information was not in reality worthy of the name of knowledge. They had acquired what little they did know of the spiritworld from various classes of spirits—opinions for the most part contradictory to each other—and now greatly distorted by their own addition of theories and assump-

tions in order to render such information more feasible and acceptable to man.

Concerning sin, the inhabitants were at times greatly disturbed and affected by the influence of sinister and degraded spirits, and prompted into all acts of wickedness. They viewed these periodical visitations in a very serious light ; they struggled as best they could against these temptations, and each one sought out the path he found most comfort in following.

There was not one of all the untold numbers then living upon this immense world who had any idea of the beauty and sublime peacefulness of the life awaiting him, and thus, individually, his past ignorance was now more manifest. Complete answers were already in front of him to what were enigmas and uncertainties while in the flesh, so that he never ceased being thankful that his own views and professions were leading him to eternal happiness in unbroken peace. He was now rewarded tenfold for the trials he had undergone in the past, and his sole ambition was to attain perfection and occupy that place which he knew was awaiting him in Heaven. He was immovably convinced that he would eventually reach it ; the distance he did not care so much about, but it was the certain ending that so satisfied him.

I next obtained from my friend a few facts concerning the occupations of the inhabitants of Theoceese.

The world he had lived upon, when undergoing the material test, was one of extreme beauty to him then ; the land was very fertile, and vegetation grew in abundance. The soil was tilled, and crops were raised for the sustenance of all. Upon this world manual labour was considered almost unnecessary—indeed, a thing of the past, except to those who would not learn to apply power to perform such work as was required. In times past all labour had been done by hand, but increased knowledge had taught them the advisability of having recourse to labour-saving inventions. Certain forces were called into operation, some natural, others supernatural to

matter. The supernatural power that was employed was extracted from certain classes of material, and applied through other substance delicate enough to utilise it.

Whatever the powers were that the inhabitants brought into play, they had now mastered sufficiently to turn to account in every direction so that when my subject's material career came to an end upon the world Theoceese, all that was necessary before applying these powers was to study the method of application. Some inhabitants worked thus, while others had ceased to work, living upon the fruits of past labour.

The present state of progress upon Theoceese was one in which comforts and pleasures were present in abundance ; however, the prickings of conscience were ever on the increase to mar what would otherwise be a happy existence ; and so great at times was the depression apparent in all that they were now well-nigh on the verge of despair.

The history of the progress of this world, from the existence of primitive man down to its present highly advanced position, was very briefly explained. Theoceese was a large world, but of course I could not obtain any data from which to compare it with our earth. The inhabitants in many respects were similar to man, and prompted by similar motives. In olden times they were divided into different tribes, some more intelligent than others, with the inevitable result that in the long run intelligence gained the upper hand, and conquered the less privileged ones. All were then recognised as being equal and treated equally. War was unheard of at the present day, however prevalent it might have been in the past. Intermixing of all the inhabitants of this world was an established fact, and to it is mainly attributable the superior privileges which they enjoy, for the intelligent naturally gravitated to the front in every direction, made all laws, kept the evil under restraint, looked after the weak, invented improved methods in labour-saving

industry, stimulated progress in art and science, and generally promoted the welfare of the entire community.

From the explanation I received of all types mixing in common, it was evident that there must have been a rapid and easy means of communication, if not of locomotion—that is, of course, if this world is at all near the size of the earth. The population seemed to be enormous, and the food-supply was obtained from many sources, but as far as my information went it was for the most part extracted forcibly from some substance, and made up into a composition requisite as nourishment for the material body. Indeed, there appeared to be no difficulty at all in the food-supply, nor yet was there anything lacking in the way of bodily comforts and amusement. The great subjection under which they were held lay in the mental organs—in the prickings of conscience and the promptings of the eternal instinct—and my informant referred in strong terms to the great distress from which he had suffered in consequence, but now was fully assured of the reward following his faithful obedience to this subjection.

The interview must have lasted a considerable length of time, and when I felt that he had imparted all the information pertinent to my present inquiry I thanked him for his courtesy, and informed him that his tale should be recorded, and that in due time man upon the world from which I came would have the privilege of reading his statements, and thus getting a faint glimpse into the general circumstances which maintained upon the world Theoceese.

In reply he stated that all interest he had hitherto taken in the welfare of his at one-time-beloved Theoceese was now a thing of the past, but that the recollection of it was still present in his mind. He quite sympathised with mankind in his limited surroundings, for now he was more definitely acquainted with the great and hidden obstacles which prevented the yearning, good soul from clearly understanding what a glorious future awaited it.

He disappeared, and I remained for some moments alone, then Minerva advanced and communed with me. Her observations over, she forthwith bid me adieu and vanished. I was then not in the least anxious to remain any longer in the spiritworld, for my power was now quite exhausted from the earnest attention which I had centred upon the interview with my late subject. The object of this visit was now accomplished, and all my expectations replaced by satisfaction, so I returned to my material body filled with admiration for the engaging spirit from whom I had just parted.

CHAPTER III

ETERNAL IGNORANCE

December 2.—This evening I was ready as usual to start out upon a fresh expedition in search of more knowledge concerning souls subjected upon other worlds.

The interesting nature of my previous interview had stimulated me into a mood of great expectancy, and as the time drew near I wondered what was in store for me, what type of spirit I should have the privilege of interviewing, and what new tale of different material life would be recited to me.

Whilst I was thus wondering it was no less probable that my next subject was similarly occupied, although no doubt he had just entered a world where there was novelty and splendour enough to attract his whole admiration and attention for some time to come ;—an electric world where powers and currents were in operation totally beyond the highest expectations of any new arrival.

Minerva herself went amongst the countless myriads of spirits in the Second Sphere, and at infinite trouble selected a few who had something of interest to communicate. Each selection was made by a master hand, who brought intelligence to bear in the making of it, so each one's story would in its own way help to explain to the fullest extent, in the shortest and most effective manner, the various spiritual types as well as the different phases noticeable in the plan of separation, all of which come within the range of Minerva's mission to man for his own benefit.

Minerva goes into their midst, reads their past material

lives and their ideas of the future, detects their classifications, chooses such as in her estimation are best suited for her purpose, and through the power of her mission connects them with herself, so that when everything is ready she sends the stranger spirit, who, through the power of connection previously established with the subject, goes direct to the latter and conducts him to my presence, where I interview him.

In no sense of the word are any spirits of this classification made prisoners or spiritually bound. To each one whom she has selected Minerva explains in brief her requirements, and states the reasons why she has chosen him particularly. She next obtains his consent to volunteer whatever information he is able, and thus a magnetic current of connection is established between the two. This current of connection Minerva controls herself, until she wishes him brought before her, then she transfers it to the stranger spirit, who in a few seconds returns with him, no matter in what part of his sphere he may then be. When the interview is over this spirit has discharged his liability, so the sympathetic current is at an end, and he returns to his previous occupation, for he is now no longer under any obligation.

On this occasion, after performing my preliminary duties and arousing my spiritual senses into activity, I stood before Minerva, prepared to obey such instructions as she might have determined upon for my present edification. I found her in the thoughtful attitude so habitual to her; her figure refulgent with brightness, and her whole form perfectly aglow with power, which my spiritual senses interpreted as possessing unbounded knowledge and determination.

"Now, sir," she began, "we shall without delay proceed to business. The spirit whom I have chosen for you to question has been carefully selected so that he may acquaint you, through the knowledge he still possesses of his past human existence, with a condition which will throw much light upon my statements in regard to different

worlds being tenanted by different types of eternal souls. It will reveal God's omnipotence and omniscience much more clearly than any communications of mine can ever do. The story which this spirit will relate to you may be relied upon, for he is faithful. He has not been long in the spiritworld, hence his knowledge of affairs here is very limited. He comes from an ignorant world, where the majority of souls being tested are possessed of certain eternal properties of a character which will not permit of advancement in any form or shape, for they are eternal, ignorant souls, being for the most part directly and firmly opposed to goodness. The chief characteristic features of these souls are absent in man, for man is placed upon a world where Omniscience has selected and located a certain type or certain types of eternal souls, all more or less compatible in unchangeable instinct with each other, and where they can mix in common without serious results arising from the extremes of intelligence noticeable among them clashing with each other. Upon the world from which this spirit hails, however, you will learn that such is not the case, hence its backwardness is great, for I have just stated that the eternal properties of the vast majority of its inhabitants are of such a nature that they will not allow fraternisation in any shape whatever with good and faithful souls. They are veritably degraded properties, worse than any ideas you can conjure up of intense ignorance and depravity.

"All eternal properties are manifested almost entirely through the brain of the individual, hence the residents upon this world are by their souls, in virtue of their inherent properties, in dense ignorance, which it is impossible for them to overcome; and so opposed are they to goodness that they cannot even tolerate the crudest symptoms of it, hence ignorance upon this world is the most pronounced feature of its inhabitants, and, as to the results of this ignorance, you will be informed of the social phases in evidence when this spirit crossed over.

But first you had better question him and obtain what testimony you can, then I shall further explain the reasons for the existence of such characteristics."

My subject was now placed in the usual position facing me—a young man, who in appearance and physical build was a perfect Hercules, of great size and breadth, indicating that when upon a material world he must have possessed phenomenal strength. In other respects his figure was precisely as all figures are in the spirit form. His brightness was not very marked, self-confidence was imprinted upon every line of his features, but knowledge undoubtedly was lacking, for his presence betrayed a decided weakness in this respect. In every direction he was the very opposite to the spirit from Theoceese, whom I had lately examined, for in him intelligence and refinement were the most prominent features; and if each of these spirits were a typical example of the general characteristics of the inhabitants of each respective world, how different indeed must Theoceese be from this world!

Marian immediately assumed her position as interpreter, and the interview began:

"Well, sir! You, I understand, have not been in this region of wonders very long?"

"No, sir; I have been here but a very short time."

"Are you happy in this world?"

"Greatly so! I am both contented and happy."

"More so than upon the world you came from?"

"Yes, indeed. But everything is so different, I cannot understand it at all."

"Have you any desire to return to your old home?"

"No, sir, none whatever; in all respects I am much better off here."

"How do you occupy your time in this world?"

"I travel about wherever I wish, taking in the marvellous sights, and obtaining all the information I can get concerning my present position."

"Do you believe in God?"

"Yes, and it is a comfort to me to be able to realise that I can attain to a standard of perfect happiness."

"Were there many who exercised faith upon your world?"

"There were some who studied the traditional religious theories, but I regret to say that very few ever really believed them."

"Did you believe implicitly when you were there?"

"No, sir, I am afraid not as I should have done. Frequently I thought and wished that they were true, and I believed, but did not grasp the exact nature of the truth."

"Now, my friend, just tell me what you did believe when you exercised your faith."

"Well, that is something I do not clearly know myself. I could not comprehend our religion beyond a few main points, which I am now able to look at correctly and understand for myself."

"Can you tell me what these main points were concerning your religion?"

"Yes, sir. Ages ago there was a religious theory established by our ancestors who understood it, and all the important points in this profession were carefully handed down for the benefit of succeeding generations, but, as a matter of fact, the present inhabitants understand it scarcely at all. It foretold a future without an end, and an existence in which all who participated would be more highly favoured than in their present one. It prophesied of a Great King, unseen and mysterious, whose wrath against them had been the cause of their present miserable position, surrounded by enemies, and in perpetual warfare. This greatest of great Invisible Kings would in due time come and overthrow their enemies and rule their world in justice and wisdom, selecting to be his followers all whom he considered worthy to remain ever to do his bidding; and these chosen ones would hereafter live in perfect happiness obeying their King's commands. That all those who

had been killed fighting against their enemies would be restored into existence again, with greater power to help this Great King to conquer his enemies, and so subdue them that no disturbance would ever recur, and that no pestilence and no famine would again carry them off. All such would live in great happiness, but those who had not believed in the advent of the Great King would be thrust out and overruled by the servants of this King.

“Such in the main was the future I fully expected awaited me, and the thought of such happiness at times made me anxious about obtaining it as a reward. I was ignorant then, so in truth were our ancestors who compiled this belief; but now I realise that the future is not one spent in the bodies of old, as they taught, but in new and different bodies, endowed with greater powers and capable of reaching a condition undreamt of in the past. The Great King of my material ideas, magnified almost beyond recognition, is the One I hope to serve in the future; indeed, I know most assuredly that I shall serve Him for ever and ever.”

My informant went on to explain how but comparatively few of the inhabitants credited this belief, for in their ignorance and backwardness they would not have patience to wait, and as age succeeded age and still no king came to deliver them from their enemies, so this ancient teaching was slowly being discarded by all save a few, who cherished it and clung to it with great tenacity.

He pictured to me the bulk of mankind, rude and turbulent, with limbs and muscles of prodigious strength, living upon roots and vegetable-matter growing in its wild state, with no houses to shelter them and but little to cover their bodies. This class, comprising the very great proportion of all the inhabitants, was opposed to progress and order in any form. The several types composing it waged incessant war amongst themselves and against those who endeavoured to improve their condition.

He related how the two divisions existed in continual fear of each other, how the intelligent and progressive

community lived in strongholds from which any of them rarely strayed far for fear of their enemies, and how the ignorant and barbarous class rudely existed and perpetually fostered the determination to exterminate them, frequently gathering together in countless hordes and bearing down upon their strongholds, with no weapons save their terrible muscles and thews, and an occasional stick. Those upon the defensive were provided with machinery of war, which, although very crude in design, struck terror into the hearts of their enemies, but what they lacked in bravery these wild tribes frequently accomplished by numbers, so that their fortifications were often wrecked and every soul killed. Here and there these citadels were dotted all over this world as centres of struggling intelligence, at the same time acting as irritants to those opposed to any advance whatever ; and the longer the interval between each attack the greater the determination of the majority to wipe out all opposition to their primitive habits. It was during one of these periodical assaults upon their fenced cities that my informant had lost his life, struggling to overcome his enemies and preserve his comrades from destruction.

It was the rarest thing imaginable for any member of these savage tribes to die a natural death. Some fell victims to pestilence or famine, but nearly all were killed in the incessant warfare waged among themselves, jealous of each other's supremacy. Indeed, with all classes of the community a violent death seemed almost to be the natural channel by which the souls from this world were precipitated into the spiritworld, and such a method of terminating the material existence was regarded as quite in keeping with their intelligence and aspirations.

Some of the fiercer and more turbulent tribes were led by warriors of great age and great renown—men who had never met their equals in strength in any of the combats they had engaged in. One of their chief amusements was to challenge each other to single combat,

and as they all solely relied upon their individual physical attainments for supremacy, so it is not unnatural that the permanent victors should be held in the highest veneration by all members of the tribes.

The worst and most unsociable of these barbarians kept themselves severely aloof from all others, and on no consideration ever associated with those outside their own level of ignorance. The entire country was thus populated by innumerable tribes, varying in habits and intelligence from the most degraded and backward to the most reasonable and progressive.

None of these were family tribes, composed exclusively of families and relatives, for it was instinct in every young savage to find out and attach himself to his equals, and in this way also the settlements of the intelligent and faithful were constantly replenished, even from children of those who ranged themselves amongst the most barbarous. This same feature applied to both sexes, for the eternal properties of each individual soul would assert themselves, regardless of antecedents and parentage.

Not unfrequently recruits from the most degraded communities showed themselves the most earnest believers in the religion of the country. Some of them ultimately became the leading members of these settlements, and the most active promoters of every intelligent attempt at progress. On the other hand, many of those religiously brought up, and living in civilised circles, following the trend of their eternal instinct, abandoned a life so uncongenial to their debased qualities, and must needs satisfy their morbid cravings by joining some barbarous tribe, and thus eventually hurling themselves against their relations and former companions.

The civilised and religious communities living in the various strongholds cultivated the land within their boundaries, built structures, invented various contrivances, carefully considered the traditions, and studied the documents handed down to them through successive generations. All attempts at improvement, however,

were severely handicapped by the constant and overpowering presence of so great a majority of ignorant beings, hence no lasting progress worth noting had ever been accomplished since the date of the earliest records.

All work was done manually, and animals were rarely requisitioned to assist man except for travelling quickly ; but even in this respect they were solely employed by the more intelligent class, for the ruder types relied entirely upon their physical strength in every action of life.

Such an audacious experiment as attempting to journey round this world was never thought of. All the travelling that was ever done was accomplished by messengers, and sometimes by inhabitants from neighbouring settlements intervisiting with their friends in adjoining strongholds, but even this was attended by considerable danger, for the uncivilised natives regarded the progressive class as their deadly enemies and lost no opportunity of killing them.

He also told me that among the various members of the family to which he belonged different traits were strongly marked in each individual. His parents were both believers in the traditional religion, and had done their best to inculcate their own ideas into the minds of their children. He individually had followed this belief, but in doing so had experienced no inconsiderable amount of mental solicitude ; however, he now felt deeply gratified at the course he had pursued, which he knew would end in perfect happiness, but very different from the future he had been taught to expect.

He presented to me a world whereon vegetation grew in abundance, and provided sustenance for all. The amusements in vogue were of a very circumscribed nature, essentially in keeping with the general status of the people, and for the most part were limited to development of the physical frame and feats of strength ; thus all classes were permanently in readiness to assume the

offensive or otherwise. Each tribe was essentially self-supporting and self-contained ; the same with the progressive community, for none were dependent upon their neighbours in any respect.

My informant's knowledge of the world he had inhabited was strictly confined to the neighbourhood in which he had dwelt. He knew nothing about distant localities, but was of the opinion that the entire world was just the same wherever man was found. There was almost continual light all over this world, and darkness was practically an unknown condition.

Concerning the early history of this world he knew nothing beyond what had been handed down from remote ages, and this tradition taught that long ago all the inhabitants sprang from a common source. This beginning, wrapt up in the dim, mysterious past, and so indefinitely understood at the present day, was credited by very few indeed, for it described how all mankind had gradually developed into the substance of which the present material body is composed. This was the view their primitive forefathers entertained of their first confinement upon a material world, but such was not generally accepted as being consistent with their present knowledge and opinions concerning matter.

This formula of belief was handed down among the educated class alone, and alone acknowledged by them as genuine, and was preserved in documents whose contents were solely perused by, and whose whereabouts were known exclusively to, the highest officials of the community.

The history of his nation from time immemorial had been a perpetual struggle for existence, with few breaks in it of peace and happiness ; nevertheless, the intelligent section had persistently managed to uphold their rights, a duty which had been sternly enforced upon them by their ancestors.

The account given me of the history of these people was essentially limited to that of the locality from which

my informant came, but many others, equally advanced, had traditions and histories of their own.

The foregoing information is the sum total of what I was able to extract from this witness, for it was evident from his statements that the particular world upon which he underwent the test had not made any noticeable progress towards God since being first inhabited, therefore the conditions which maintained upon it at the present day must still be of the most primitive order, and the mental attainment of even the most enlightened communities must be at a terribly low ebb compared with that of man upon this earth.

I turned to Marian and informed her that I thought my subject had exhausted his stock of knowledge upon matters pertaining to my needs, but at the same time I asked her if she could suggest any other topic for explanation or discussion. Her reply was to the effect that as no appreciable progress was manifest upon that world, no advance in art, science, inventions, or improvements of any kind, so the field for inquiry was necessarily very limited, and that I had obtained all the items of importance he was in a position to disclose.

I released him, and soon he was lost to my vision in the eternity of space.

Minerva then returned to her previous position, a short distance in front of me, and resumed her observations at the point at which she had left off when I was requested to examine this spirit.

"Now, sir," she observed, "from your recent interview you have obtained quite an insight into the peculiar instincts and habits of the souls subjected upon the material world from which your subject came. At first impression the testimony may not appear of great importance, but upon more mature consideration, and viewing this spirit's statement from an eternal, as well as a human, aspect, it greatly enhances in value. You have had an inhabitant of an extremely ignorant world giving you a rough outline of the conditions in operation

upon the world in question. He has represented to you a very melancholy and almost retrograde state of affairs ; indeed, so backward is it that the present inhabitants are actually less intelligent upon the whole than primitive man was upon the earth soon after he was created. They have not advanced in the least towards God in knowledge, and what is more, there is not the remotest likelihood that they will ever do so. Other worlds have progressed, some quickly, some slowly, but this one has practically remained in a stationary position, therefore there must be some great reason why such should be the case. This world in question is inhabited, as I have already told you, by souls the majority of whom are of an inferior eternal grade to any of those ordained to be subjected upon your earth. The evil unchangeable properties of these souls are classified in a distinct category by themselves, for they are incompatible in every sense of the word with goodness. The Great Father has thus deemed it wise that these and such as these should be placed upon worlds by themselves. The faithful souls who are also confined upon this world, as well as those possessed of eternal properties of goodness, which, however, are of a nature peculiar to themselves, and opposed to evil, endeavour to advance, but the fact of their being literally overwhelmed by evil on all sides, and evil of a nature worse than man can imagine, nullifies any actual progress. The power of evil in this world is of a very ardent type, and in goodness it recognises its eternal enemy, so is ever instinctively seeking to crush it out, for this is its only happiness. This world has, by its own merits, made no advancement whatever, still, the faithful have the same chance of developing faith. Their aspirations and anticipations may be limited, but they are essentially in keeping with the contracted nature of their intelligence, hence the future of eternity they look forward to is equal to their highest ideals of happiness. Their conceptions of future happiness are solely based upon their present material knowledge. They picture a con-

dition similar to the one in which they now exist as their ultimate reward. They know of no other existence, for their powers are so restricted to matter as to be incapable of appreciating anything beyond it, hence eternal affairs have never been revealed to them. But you cannot fail to have noticed, sir, that when this spirit awakened to find that the future existence in reality was not in the form that he expected, but an existence distinctly pertaining to the eternal one, with the Great Father recognisable from a grand advanced standpoint, and the knowledge that in His presence future perfect happiness is awaiting all who arrive there, such an awakening was a complete compensation for his having been so severely restricted upon a world of ignorance and evil. He had not exercised great faith when in the flesh, otherwise he would have reached a higher sphere ; still, coming from a world where his opportunities were few, he is now receiving his reward, and rapidly gaining knowledge concerning his future estate, so he will with renewed energy and every encouragement begin his advance towards the same King whom he in the past pictured ruling upon his world, overthrowing his enemies and bestowing honourable positions upon all those who believed in him before his advent. Now this King is revealed to him as the Eternal Father, whose kingdom extends throughout space, whose real power is slowly dawning upon him, and in whose glory he knows that perfect happiness awaits him."

CHAPTER IV

SEENŌRE AND ABA-SEENŌRĒ

December 4.—The spirit whom I was now called upon to interview came from a world altogether different from that upon which my last subject had lived.

In appearance he was short and stout, and the general outline of his figure indicated that he had attained an advanced age before he died. He impressed me by his countenance as having been an intelligent and thoughtful person, and his whole form was bright, clearly denoting that he was a faithful spirit. He had not been in the spiritworld long, indeed, he had but very recently arrived there. He informed me that he was extremely happy, and had not the least desire to return to his old home, for the knowledge of what a superior existence is like, as he observed, makes one intolerant of a return to an inferior position ; besides, he knew perfectly well that it was only a matter of time before he would reach perfection and dwell in heaven for all future eternity.

This spirit was replete with information concerning the world upon which he had been confined, and which, he informed me, the inhabitants knew by the name of Seenōrē. He had been deeply interested during life in acquiring as much knowledge as possible upon objects and conditions around him, both those that were upon his own world and those that were visible from it, for, as a matter of fact, during the latter portion of his material existence this had been his principal occupation.

The world Seenōrē, he explained to me, was composed for the most part of substance whereon vegetable life abounded in great luxuriance. Huge tracts of this world,

however, were covered by immense bodies of semi-condensed or semi-solidified vapour, which in recent times scientists have explained as being there for a great purpose.

This semi-gaseous, semi-solid substance was essential to the bodily comfort, if not the very existence, of man upon this world. At certain times it became less dense, and gradually arose into the air, spreading itself out until eventually this entire world was enveloped in mist. This took place at regular intervals, when another world, Aba-Seenōrē, came into its vicinity.

This world, Aba-Seenōrē, was very brilliant, and produced a great effect upon Seenōrē when it approached near, making all vegetable life spring into activity, so that in a very short time the whole country became a veritable paradise. Then it was that this vapour slowly arose from its normal locations and overshadowed the face of the world so as to mitigate the intense heat and light coming from Aba-Seenōrē, at the same time providing moisture for the soil. As this world neared its proximate limit great atmospheric disturbances took place, and storms prevailed over the length and breadth of Seenōrē for some time, then everything resumed its wonted calm, the vapour gradually returned to its semi-solid consistency, and the world Aba-Seenōrē sped away from Seenōrē upon its journey through space.

In very remote times the dwellers upon Seenōrē were but little above the beasts of the field in their habits, living among them, and subsisting upon the vegetation that grew in its wild state; their reasoning powers and versatility of genius being the properties which alone distinguished them from the lower animals.

How long primitive man lived in this original state it is, of course, very difficult to determine, but tradition has it that this kind of existence lasted for many generations. All this time he was slowly storing up knowledge and becoming more intelligent, until his advance had reached a level when he could no longer tolerate such degraded

habits, so he built dwelling-places to live in, and cultivated the soil so as to make it produce food in large quantities.

Every human soul upon Seenōrē had an instinctive craving to worship something, hence in ages gone by they all naturally worshipped this mysterious sphere, Aba-Seenōrē. They were witnesses of its regular periodical return, and in fear and trembling vigilantly watched for its approach so that they might begin to propitiate it in real earnest. The educated eyes of those ever on the look-out for this much-dreaded Aba-Seenōrē soon detected the first sign of its reappearance ; then the news was heralded all over the land, and every inhabitant immediately began to prepare himself for its sacred return by prayer and fasting and torment. Thus they grew more and more excited as Aba-Seenōrē loomed up in the distance, all the time increasing in size and brilliancy. To add to their awe and veneration the hitherto semi-solidified vapour took upon itself activity, and slowly arose from its various beds, as if to go and meet this mighty power. Everything was then enveloped in mist, and nothing more was seen of Aba-Seenōrē for some time. Prayers and fasting and penance were then redoubled, and kept up persistently until this dreaded visitor was seen steadily receding from them and growing less in the distance.

This was the power which in their estimation brought destruction and pestilence and war upon them if they did not adequately propitiate its wrath ; while, on the other hand, good omens would be noticed during the period of Aba-Seenōrē's absence if they had satisfied their mysterious and exacting God by their acts of self-abnegation.

All this paganistic form of worship was suddenly brought to an end by a remarkable incident that happened, producing a great commotion among the people and causing a diversity of opinion forthwith to take root concerning the future existence.

Certain men, three in number, suddenly appeared as if they were dead, soon, however, to regain animation,

telling remarkable accounts of what they had seen and been informed of during absence from their bodies. These men were, no doubt, each of them in a trance, for, according to my informant's story, such was proved to be the case in after years by result.

Each of these men wrote down his own account, in his own way, of what he himself had beheld and been told. In particulars these prophets did not exactly agree, but the general consensus of information was tantamount to the same. They prophesied the near advent of some great power which would be bestowed upon them all ; they foretold of a world where all believers would ultimately live in perfect happiness and peace under a Mighty King, and of mysteries beyond explanation or even comprehension by the most intelligent and scientific of latter-day inhabitants.

Such information this spirit told me he now knew to be true, since he had entered the spiritworld, but it was so far beyond the understanding of the people at the time when it was divulged that it was explained in their language so as to convey a totally wrong meaning.

This entire revelation was to be proved as correct by the coming of a power which would prompt men to believe and do what was right (the descent of the Holy Ghost). All awaited its arrival in great excitement, wonder, and doubt. At last it came with unexpected suddenness, and was felt by everybody. Some in consequence believed that the revelation was genuine, others would not credit it in the least, and thus there sprung up many new theories and much diversity of opinion.

One interpretation in particular was given of the future life, and submitted to the people as the most rational meaning of these prophecies. This construction met with general acceptance, for it was considered exactly in keeping with their material way of viewing things. This interpretation taught that the promised Heaven was a great distance off, and that this body, Aba-Seenōrē, was sent at regular intervals to take away all those who

had died since its last visit, to be judged by the Great King upon His throne, counselled by His wisest advisers.

This spirit described to me in graphic terms what took place from a material aspect, and what was supposed to take place invisibly when Aba-Seenōrē reached the point in its course nearest to Seenōrē.

When Aba-Seenōrē came to a standstill, as each one had an opportunity occasionally of proving for himself, all those who had died upon Seenōrē since its last visit were taken upon this sphere, and all necessary details explained to them. Immediately this was done Aba-Seenōrē started out upon its return journey, visiting all other worlds and performing the same office towards them in the interval between its visits to Seenōrē.

As this world approached increasingly nearer all those who had dead relatives evinced great anxiety, and had frequent recourse to prayer and fasting, in order, if possible, to mitigate the sins recorded against their deceased friends, whom they endeavoured to comfort in their invisible forms. Aba-Seenōrē came on with great rapidity and the semi-solid substance ascended to meet it. The angels in charge of the dead collected and placed them upon these various slowly rising masses of vapour, the relatives all the while in grief and supplication watching them almost insensibly disappear from view. This continued until Aba-Seenōrē reached its terminal point, when their entire world was overshadowed by a dense vapour.

During this occlusion it was supposed that all the souls of the departed were collected together from the different ethereal vehicles, and in some mysterious way ferried over to Aba-Seenōrē upon an unusually large and dense body of vapour. They were then delivered into the hands of the Great King's servants, each soul carrying with him a long list of sins committed in the flesh. The angels of death then returned on their vapour transports and slowly retraced their several journeys back to Seenōrē. Aba-Seenōrē had by this time set out upon its retreat,

carrying to heaven the souls of the deceased, to the place where the judgment throne was stationed. Each soul was then carefully and justly examined, and received such reward or punishment as he deservedly merited.

After these mysterious and invisible angels of death had safely returned to Seenōrē, the vapour slowly contracted and finally resumed its wonted consistency. The general excitement then subsided, and all quite naturally went back to their several duties until the next approach of the dreaded visitor.

Unfortunately for such a beautiful and simple explanation of the ways of the Eternal Father, science and intelligence stepped in and brought these halcyon days of materialised faith to an end.

The inhabitants of Seenōrē are a reasonable and progressive community. It was impossible for them as a world to stand still ; their eternal instincts at all times made themselves felt, hence everything that was conducive to a steady advance to their eternal level was clutched at and fostered. The science of astronomy proved that this sphere, Aba-Seenōrē, did not visit other worlds as was taught by this interpretation, but that it travelled in a certain elliptic orbit in space. It also in time proved that Aba-Seenōrē did not actually stop, as had hitherto been supposed, when at its proximal to Seenōrē, but was, as a matter of fact, travelling faster in the acute curve of its orbit preparatory to a rapid retreat. This curve happened to be in a line directly away from Seenōrē, so in their ignorance of the elliptic movement it was natural for them to infer that Aba-Seenōrē stood still for a short time.

Science also proved very much more which in a common sense way upset many of the theories and prejudices of the inhabitants. This semi-solid substance was stripped of the mysterious properties it had previously possessed in the minds of the people, and by which it had so long overawed them, for science proved that it had an important bearing upon their material welfare.

Science, therefore, practically put an end to their religion. Thus the inhabitants of this world demonstrated that they were an intelligent and unbiassed race, for they recognised that their religion could not be the correct one if it taught them that which science and common sense clearly proved to be impossible. Can so much be said of man ?

In their despair they had recourse to the writings of these same prophets who had so mysteriously advised their forefathers. They studied them carefully, and analysed the meaning of each assertion, with the result that they determined to consult this great power which had been revealed by these prophets as about to be bestowed upon them. According to a certain document they found that it had descended as predicted, and was even then present with them, in a manner very similar to that in which man recognises Conscience upon this earth. But from the explanation I received it was evidently much more highly developed, hence more powerful to influence.

This Power of the Holy Ghost (universally bestowed at the day of Pentecost) was the one they were desirous of approaching, since it was acknowledged by all as being in their midst. From it the great secret was to be wrested. Science again stepped in and proved that a power of such an abstruse nature could only be supernatural, and therefore must have emanated from a supernatural source ; but as the prophets had revealed scarcely anything in this respect, so many believed one thing, many another. Gradually more knowledge was granted them, until further advanced proofs led them into a new channel altogether, so that eventually, through supernatural cultivation of certain normal senses, they had reached their present advanced position, wherein God was pictured to them in His Eternal Perfection, and their future existence was explained to them by common-sense reasoning as being what it actually is.

Their progress in knowledge of the occult had been

very systematic but slow, and it had occupied many generations before they had attained their present standard. But, my informant went on to say, they were still in great ignorance of the magnitude of the change that took place at death, as well as of the marvellous nature of the world that awaited them ; nevertheless, their views, although extremely limited, were in the proper channel.

All their gradually acquired knowledge upon religion had been derived from this power, which was ever influencing them, with the result that more intimate acquaintance with it served only to increase their ability to add to the receipts already obtained from the same source.

In a world so densely populated as Seenōrē it could not be expected that all would credit one profession of faith, hence a great many different doctrines held sway among the people. So numerous, indeed, were the various theories adopted by different communities that it was quite beyond the capacity of any one man to become acquainted with them all.

Some of these doctrines, apart from the recognised religion of the country, taught faith in the Godhead, others did not, while others, again, repudiated everything that could not be proved in a material, common-sense way, and would have nothing to do with the supernatural agency portion.

The inhabitants of Seenōrē had attained to a high degree of excellence in their knowledge of supernatural forces, and they utilised them very extensively in their daily vocations, in every walk of life ; hence, through this advanced acquaintance with supernatural powers they satisfactorily proved to their reasoning faculties the absolute certainty of a supernatural existence in the future.

The science of astronomy particularly had contributed to their knowledge of supernatural forces, for astronomers had thoroughly mastered the various powers and laws of

the universe in operation in their own locality. This one department of astronomy seemed to be the keynote to their rapid progress, for through such science it was evident they had discovered the secret of supernatural existence.

My well-informed spiritual companion described to me this mysterious sphere, Aba-Seenōrē, with regular persistency visiting their region of the universe, with its brilliant power and remarkable effect upon Seenōrē. It rushed onwards towards Seenōrē with great rapidity, until it reached the limit of its orbit, then it swung round and ultimately receded from their vision. Its course could be traced by astronomers to traverse an immense area of space, only to return again at its appointed time. The advent of Aba-Seenōrē was always foretold correctly, but of course my informant could give me no definite idea of the length of time that elapsed between each return, but according to his explanation I inferred that it only visited that region of the universe at considerable intervals of time. Aba-Seenōrē was proved by their astronomers to make these periodical visitations in obedience to the great laws governing the movements of heavenly bodies, and its regular return was now looked forward to with expectation and pleasure.

He also assured me that the population was very well informed in all respects. There was but little need for any great amount of manual labour, as most of the work was done by artificial means, therefore the people had plenty of time to devote to mental culture. The food-supply was ample, so no anxiety was occasioned in that respect. They travelled throughout the length and breadth of their world, visiting each other and enjoying the great sights of nature. Messages of all kinds were conveyed by supernatural agency. They manufactured whatever constructions they had need of by means of power applied to material, abundance of all necessities for such manufacture seemingly being ready at hand. But where their greatest anxiety evinced itself was in

regard to this power which was constantly manifest among them, and through whose agency all progressive knowledge was obtained. This power ever restricted all those who devoted their attention to matters relative to the future existence.

At times this power was so intense and exacting in its demands that they were all compelled to consider the mysteries of the future existence in a very serious light; consequently many were led into believing in the eternal and invisible God, or, as my informant was sorry to state, it drove numbers into a denial of any future of eternity.

Evil was a property which upon this world was not extensively evident, although it was by no means absent, but all who openly indulged in it were compelled to associate together by themselves, where they could give free bent to whatever opinions they held concerning their future.

This very enlightened spirit said that for a long time he individually had been tossed about on the rough waves of doubt, studying one set of theories and doctrines after another, but, finally, he had surrendered himself entirely to the promptings of his conscience. His career as a sceptic was then at an end, and he returned to his investigations upon eternal affairs well satisfied at the unalterable decision at which he had arrived. Now he informs me that the actual truth far surpasses anything he had conjectured. He has discovered wherein his past views fell short in their interpretation of unseen conditions, and at present he is solely occupied feasting his soul upon the realities of what were mysteries to him when in his bodily form.

My friend had not been in the spiritworld very long, therefore as yet he had not made more than a superficial examination of the beautiful world which was now to be his home, but he informed me that he at least knew sufficient to convince him of the fact that he would eventually attain perfection. This knowledge so completely consoled him that he was not as yet eager to advance,

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for he felt that he must first elucidate the many difficult problems which in the past had caused him so much anxiety.

He bid me adieu, and I was left to meditate upon the gravity of all the observations he had made.

CHAPTER V

SPIRITUAL CURRENTS

December 5.—My whole attention this evening was occupied in listening to some very interesting observations and explanations by Minerva, upon the various powers and currents in operation in the spiritworld, as far as they had any direct bearing upon my present work.

“Sir,” Minerva commenced in her usual thoughtful and measured tones, “you are now in a position which enables me to make a few explanations upon the powers and currents natural to the spiritworld, in relation to the different grades of eternal souls who inhabit it. You have noticed in our own small circle, where we transact spiritual business, that harmony is always present, that all interested and occupied, including yourself, know exactly what is expected of them, or what is proper for them to do, but you are as yet unacquainted with spiritual workings in their higher and more refined forms. You have also noticed that, when you address any of us during conversation, first of all a current of connection is established, then the information quickly passes from one to the other. You in your spiritual form have seen this and know it to be the case, but when we communicate with you in the way in which I am at present doing, the communications are slow, in order that your brain may be allowed time to receive a firm impression of what is said.

“Sir, it is an easy thing for one spirit to converse with one other spirit only ; again, one spirit can so exercise his communicative power that many may receive the current. Spiritual communications, however, are most

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certainly limited in the distance to which they can be transmitted. A powerful spirit, for instance, may be able to communicate information to all spirits in your earth's region, but not throughout the entire First Sphere. This spiritual communication consists of currents of information which are conveyed to their destinations by the power which spirits possess for this purpose. Such is simply an advanced method to the plan pursued by man in conversing. Noises and sounds are, as a matter of fact, electric currents originating from matter, conveyed through a limited medium, received by matter, and recognised by the soul, confined in a material body in a way already explained. Matter, you know, is restricted to time, for it is not eternal ; anything, therefore, that originates from matter cannot be eternal, but is strictly and severely limited. Thus, then, through a common-sense explanation you have sound proved to be limited in its power to penetrate far. This power in its vulgar form does not travel in one direction only, but in all directions from the place whence it originated. You know, sir, your earthly sounds and noises as well as I do, their restrictions and limitations. Spiritual existence you also know is of a superior kind, advanced in all respects beyond the material existence of man. Spirits possess bodies of substance which more nearly approaches perfection, hence all their senses also must in consequence be superior to man's, and thus it is that spirits have power to restrict their communications to one or many. Through this power they are able to send messages to other fellow workers who are within a limited radius, beyond this they call a messenger to convey the message. These messengers are attracted by the very desire for one becoming manifest. Such methods, you see, are distinctly advanced beyond any which man possesses, for currents are established through laws of a superior order to any with which man is acquainted.

“ So much, then, for the spiritual condition ; but the spiritual condition in its turn, with all its very advanced

properties, cannot in any respect bear comparison with perfect communicative powers. The Father's kingdom extends throughout space ; His knowledge and power also permeate distance unlimited, and His complete communicative powers are equal to conveying His commands to any of His servants, wherever they may happen to be, no place excepted. Such alone constitutes perfect communication in every respect, for only the Father can accomplish whatsoever He wishes with whomsoever He desires.

" You have also seen in our little meetings how all things work in unison, without any hitch being noticeable anywhere. Such unison is a natural trait in all spiritual doings, and is one of the features of the advanced properties which spirits enjoy, and compares very favourably with the human method of meeting to transact business ; but then no man will ever grasp what perfect harmony and unison are until he has crossed the stream !

" You of course noted what was said by our acquaintance who has just come from the world Seenōrē, fresh with impressions from that advanced world, where man recognises the spiritual existence, and through whose agency alone it has progressed. Man upon earth is very similarly placed in the sense that he receives his information from spiritual sources, but as yet he does not realise that such is actually the origin from which it does come. He has not yet recognised spiritual existence, but soon he will be acquainted with this fact, and then by degrees he will prove for himself that the spiritual existence is altogether superior to the material, *and that it is the only source from which further knowledge can come.* He will also take advantage of your recent interview, and from it in a measure convince himself that all information conducive to man's progress must necessarily come through the same channel as that by which he receives the promptings of his conscience.

" The power of every guide to influence his subject is overruled by the harmony that exists between his subject

and himself. Harmony can only be attained by *one who constantly recognises his conscience as always being correct*, by one who lingers before taking any doubtful step to listen to the prompting of his conscience, for in no other way can harmony be established. The subject is then in a position at first gently to ask his conscience questions, but in due time he will be able to communicate with and obtain from his guide whatever information the latter is in a position to impart.

“ Evil and frivolous communications may also be established when man once recognises spiritual existence as superior to his own, and understands the powers which these spiritual guides possess.

“ All spiritual communications are essentially delicate in their nature and delicate in their development, hence it is impossible for one who is always in a hurry to be an adept in spiritual acquirements. Time is one of the great secrets to advance in this work, and moreover, only those who possess the power of mental communion with spirits somewhat naturally developed can ever expect success. Those who are not thus gifted cannot develop the power unless they start in early youth ; indeed, in every instance, in order to command any considerable measure of success, this power must be educated from youth, just as any other study ; and man at first will find it a difficult and abstruse business until he understands the true properties of supernatural powers and existences.

“ Now, sir, you see that I have had a definite object in view in my present interview with you, and that object has been to explain why man in the past has not progressed in this particular direction—in his knowledge of the future life. Your late subject explained to you in a natural-result-sort-of-way that in the ordinary course of their progress his ancestors communicated with spirits. Perhaps it was that only a few of them ever really received substantial benefit from such communications, for spirits as well as man are under severe laws in this

respect. The inhabitants of the world Seenōrē quite naturally advanced in the way described to you, for their powers of conscience were, and are, greater than they are in man, hence the path was revealed to them without any knowledge being first given them upon the spiritual existence. But man upon your world is in a wholly different position ; his restrictions are considerably greater in this one direction, hence he must first become acquainted with the source from which his advancement will come, so that he may grow to the position gradually, and firmly rise above matter.

“ There are still several more points to explain to man before this work is completed, so far as expounding the spiritual condition as a whole is concerned. You shall also question a few more spirits, and they shall be carefully selected so that you may obtain the most suitable information. And now, sir, I think that all I have to say at present has been explained in such a way that you can understand it, so I will forthwith relieve you from the strain which my presence imposes upon your brain.”

I thanked her, and then she immediately returned to her sphere.

The strain had indeed been unusually severe upon my brain, as Minerva's power, naturally very great, had on this occasion to be considerably exerted, for she had some difficulty in explaining to me information which was to her ripe storehouse of knowledge insignificant in the extreme.

CHAPTER VI

NEITHER MAN NOR SPIRIT

December 18.—"You are here my subject," Minerva began in emphatic accents from her slightly elevated position, "to question a spirit of a distinct and peculiar type, whom I have selected for this especial purpose. You are being called upon to interrogate him, not so much on account of his history as in order that you may be made acquainted with the remarkable conditions which he will disclose to you in the course of his narrative as existing upon the world from which he has but recently arrived.

"You will have considerable difficulty in appreciating his story, for it is one which, beyond a few leading facts, you can scarcely understand; it is, therefore, that you may ascertain what these facts are that this spirit is here to be interviewed.

"These particular facts reveal to us a condition neither advanced beyond man upon the earth nor yet inferior in privileges allowed by the Father, but they are, nevertheless, of a nature entirely different from any bestowed upon him. The time will come when this spirit's narrative will be valued by man, but as he knows nothing about the peculiar circumstances which exist upon this world, so when they are first described to him he may find some difficulty in realising that such are really the prominent characteristics of other souls undergoing an equal material test in another region.

"You are now at liberty to question him and obtain all the information your brain is capable of receiving. Marian will, as usual, act as interpreter, and will translate

his answers to your questions, as far as the newly revealed circumstances of his material existence will allow."

This said, Minerva moved slowly and gracefully to the position which she always occupies whenever I interview a spirit. My subject was almost immediately placed in front of me, considerably nearer than Minerva had been, and I noticed that his figure was short and thick-set, and his general appearance conveyed to my mind the impression of one who always would be satisfied with whatever pursuit he might engage in. It was evident that he had been of an easy-going disposition, and I should say considerably short in the power of faith. Nevertheless, he was faithful, but his ambition towards perfection was prejudicially influenced by his lethargic temperament.

He seemed very willing to answer my questions, so after Marian had assumed her proper position as interpreter, and I had inspected him to my entire satisfaction the interview began.

"Now, my friend," I remarked, "I presume you have already been told the reason for this interview?"

"Yes; such has been fully explained to me, and if by answering your questions to the best of my ability I am able to help you in any way, then I shall be intensely satisfied. I am not a very intelligent spirit, but I understand that you are anxious to learn something about my past life, as well as something of the material world upon which I lived. I am afraid that I did not, when there, acquire much knowledge about that world, for few of my fellow creatures knew much of the past history of our people, or what was expected in the future."

"What was your occupation when upon that world?"

"Well, sir, my occupation and my duties were two distinct and wide-apart matters. I am very sorry to inform you that my occupation attracted me away from my legitimate duties to such an extent that eventually I became incapable of doing them properly. My nature had in it too much of the instinct of the lesser endowed

inhabitants of that world, hence I was not qualified to act with the same amount of decision and firmness as those who were gifted with more exalted mental properties. But I had faith in me, hence I am here on the right road to eternal happiness. The road, I am well aware, is a terribly long one to travel, but still I am quite satisfied now that I know I am upon it."

"Have you been given any mission yet?"

"No, sir; I have not as yet, but I hope to obtain one before long."

"Have you been in this world any length of time?"

"Perhaps I may have been here some time, but somehow your question puzzles me."

"In which way does it puzzle you?"

"Ah!—time!—that is confined to matter!—I had forgotten about time!—Yes, yes, I know now!"

"Then you must have been here quite a long time?"

"Well, perhaps I have; but now I think I can recollect somewhat about my past, and about time. Your question about time has aroused in me the remembrance of a past which I had almost forgotten—it was such a degraded existence compared with this one! If you so desire, I think I can now give you all the information I possess of my past existence."

"Thank you, sir; but I prefer to put questions to you, for my faculties are not equal to grasping communications very rapidly. I must have time, although you have no need of it; still, it is essential to me, for you must know that I come from a world where time is everything."

"Yes; now I remember how everything was ruled by time;—but it seems so strange to me in my present condition that I was once one of those dull beings from one of the material worlds. I cannot now realise how such an existence could be tolerated when in this world everything is so beautiful, and one can do just whatever one wishes. Truly, the power and knowledge of God are plainly manifest here! They are visible in every direction one looks! I am almost afraid to think about

this Omnipotent King ; His mighty works and unequalled justice to all souls are ever before me. My very inferior position in this grand spiritworld incessantly forces itself upon my mind. I realise that it is possible for me to become perfect, but the magnitude of the purification necessary almost makes me afraid to begin the undertaking ; yet I must do so, it is impossible to delay much longer. Oh, the vastness of this world ! and to think that I am capable of advancing in knowledge and power, and eventually reaching the standard required to enter heaven ! Yes, sir ! I am very soon going to start in real earnest ;—I have satisfied all my doubts and queries now, therefore I shall begin to advance before long.”

“ Then you are very happy in your present life ? ”

“ Yes, certainly ; extremely so. Yet I shall not be satisfied until I have begun to work off the blemishes that were stamped upon my soul during its temporary sojourn upon a limited world. I can do it ; I must do it ; it will require much work, I know ;—but if I had only been better upon the world I have left, and done deeds worthy of reward, and exercised greater faith, I should not now have been placed such a terribly long way from Heaven. But I cannot see how I could have been better under the circumstances, for I was handicapped by properties which prevented me from making much advance in God’s eyes.”

“ But, my friend, did you not then possess the very same properties which you have now ? ”

“ True, sir ; still I undoubtedly possess certain properties which prevent me from making rapid progress even in this world, but progress is, nevertheless, possible here, whereas upon the material world it was well-nigh impossible. I understand now how it was that the instincts of my soul had great difficulty in making themselves manifest in the limited circle of my human existence. I am also aware now that these properties were ever making themselves felt as best they could under the circumstances, but, judging from result, evidently to

little purpose. Here I can obtain information such as my soul yearns after. I can remember it perfectly well, and am able to roam about in all directions in search of it. My progress towards knowledge and happiness is now quickening at every step, but in my bodily form I was restricted to the little I did know, with very limited powers of acquiring more knowledge. My soul's properties kept urging me on in a direction antagonistic to my material inclinations, but these latter were so powerful as almost to compel me to wander about amongst the vegetation which abounded in such luxuriance, and thus satisfy my inferior senses by drinking in the delicious currents, consuming the influences, and becoming intoxicated by absorbing the delirious beauties of nature. Thus I was literally enticed away into temporary enchantment ; nor yet was I singular in this respect, for it was natural instinct in the inhabitants of the world upon which I was confined to succumb to these seductive charms."

"Can you definitely explain to me the nature of the enchantment you speak of as being so prominently manifest upon your late world ? "

The answer to this question it is almost impossible to construe into words. Marian, acting as interpreter, framed it so as to convey to my brain pictures of the mode of existence of these people. Indeed, there were a great many points in these answers completely beyond my comprehension, but Marian did her best to confine the information she imparted to me strictly to the capacity of my brain.

To man the material conditions under which these people were placed must appear extremely complicated and remarkable. The very name of the world they inhabited is one which cannot be interpreted into sounds, for it was essentially a current taking certain distinguishing features which denoted a name. Further, it was evident from the peculiar way in which everything was imparted to me that the language used upon this world

was not one of sounds, but in a form distinctly superior ; in fact, the entire communication was carried on in a style in which I had never previously had the honour of conversing with a spirit depicting the conditions in vogue upon the material world he had once inhabited.

Man's ears are given him to limit his hearing to material communications and sounds ; his brain is of a nature which confines him almost exclusively to matter ; he understands in a great measure whatever is of the same order as himself, but the inhabitants of this anomalous world were subjected under entirely different laws and circumstances to any which governed ordinary man. They communicated through a system not limited to sounds, but in one more akin to that adopted by spirits. All conditions and effects seemed to take up currents of their own, in a manner almost beyond man's understanding, to wit the description this spirit gave me of the prevailing weakness so strongly developed among all the lesser endowed inhabitants of this world, to wander about continually from one luxuriant glade to another apparently at times in a semi-dazed state, by having their almost supernatural senses enervated by the intoxicating currents emitted from the surrounding prolific vegetation—currents evidently natural to these tracts of indigenous forest life. Thus they wandered, sometimes alone, sometimes in company, often deeply absorbed and overcome to a state of careless happiness and dreamy forgetfulness, stopping here to absorb a fresh effect from the nature of growth peculiar to the locality, then aimlessly sauntering elsewhere to some new enchanting influence, stimulating again their slowly relaxing faculties. At times they seemed to have a surfeit of such profitless occupation, and would gravitate to certain fixed trysting-places where the several parties present communed together, no effort being required either to listen or to communicate ; thus they enjoyed themselves to their heart's content.

Not so, however, with all the inhabitants, for some,

through the pronounced nature of their eternal instincts, tore themselves forcibly away from such seductive pleasures, and busied themselves in the various occupations required to carry on the normal existence of the community. The indolent and lazy ones, who passed their time in fruitless semi-intoxication, were entirely dependent upon the forethought and industry of the higher class for provision against the periodical seasons of want, when all vegetation died down and semi-darkness reigned over the land.

Human nature was prominently manifest on this world as well as upon all others, for it so happened that as soon as the vegetable growth began to lose its charm and attraction to the bulk of mankind, all slowly and mechanically bent their steps towards a particular locality upon this world, where the learned and industrious inhabitants dwelt. There were no built cities to be seen, no huge structures upon the surface to indicate that civilisation existed anywhere, but great holes in the earth were here and there noticeable, leading to honeycombed caves of large dimensions, not artificial, but there seemingly as a natural provision for this peculiar type of existence. These caves were illuminated by mixing certain materials together, the combination producing a never-failing light, and were heated by a kind of fire which consumed very little fuel. These illuminations and fires were placed at intervals throughout these caverns, so that everything might be comfortable and cheery when the wanderers returned home.

This underground city, the natural home of the more highly endowed and advanced members of this world, appeared from the description I received to be enormous in extent, and capable of accommodating many times more than there were persons to occupy it. Every living soul upon this world thus found shelter during the inclement season, for any who remained outside perished from hunger and cold ; indeed, it was instinct in all to

make for this subterranean abode when certain signs manifested themselves.

The industrious section of the community worked unceasingly for the benefit of all. Making preparations against the return of that world's winter occupied their entire time and attention, when vast numbers had to be fed and looked after. It was one of the doctrines of their religion not to be idle whenever there was any work to be done. Everything was accomplished by individual physical labour, for they delighted in doing whatever they had to do for themselves by themselves, and no machinery of any kind at all was employed by the natives of this world.

As soon as returning spring once again started vegetation they spread themselves out immense distances from their home, not cultivating the land as man upon earth is accustomed to see it done, but fostering such naturally wild growths as they knew were acceptable to the people as food. When the time came for harvesting the crops all were unusually busy, sometimes carrying the supplies thus obtained extraordinary distances to their great storehouses. Abundance of everything requisite was always provided, for they lived upon a world which in this respect was generous in the extreme.

The winter period came on; the wanderers returned as a matter of course to their place of shelter, and continued their lives of ease and indolence, subsisting, without any sense of shame, upon the thrift and generosity of others.

All the compensation the more worthy class expected and received for their charitable behaviour was the satisfaction which always accrues from good works. But they did not rest here, for as soon as all were comfortable and content the learned members of the community preached to the idlers, and dilated upon the folly of leading such an aimless and degraded existence, at the same time exhorting them to think of their future welfare.

The nature of their language enabled these enlightened orators to harangue the people with great fluency and attractiveness, charming everybody exceedingly, and so working upon their feelings that many promised to reform their habits. But it was like sowing seed upon stony ground, for my informant related how, when the dark season was over, and nature aglow with returning vegetable life and its attendant seductive attractions, there were few who, regardless of the resolutions they had made, could resist the temptation, so it invariably ended in one after another stealthily sneaking out, until the city was deserted, and the face of the whole country bespotted with people seeking intoxication in the delicious emanations which the vegetable world provided for them.

The religion professed by the more aspirant class was essentially one of faith and good works in their highest and purest interpretation, for they recognised that the majority of the people were not so highly endowed in their soul's instincts as themselves, or, in other words, that their eternal properties prevented them from tearing themselves away from such temptations; hence they devoted their lives entirely to helping their fellow men, providing comfortable shelter for them during the winter, feeding them upon the best the land produced, and trying to reform each one of the multitude who so mercilessly threw himself upon their clemency and generosity.

Such attainments as reading and writing were quite unknown upon this world; their method of life not requiring them, and their superior language in a measure supplying the deficiency. The intellectual attainment of some was advanced in the extreme; and records of all events and transactions were handed down from generation to generation, and remembered by those who had previously undergone a special training for this work.

With regard to the future existence and their ideas upon it, Marian informed me that the human brain was not adapted to appreciate what their religious opinions

were. Their plan of salvation was laid upon a foundation of its own, and pointed towards a different end for each different profession, but wholly in keeping with their knowledge and endowments. They viewed God from an aspect entirely different from that in which man regards Him, but, considering the distinct and peculiar nature of their eternal properties, their ideas concerning Him, so I am informed, were correct.

This witness went on to say that among the learned fraternity were to be found students in every department of knowledge, all being happy in their several occupations, and each one doing that which his natural gifts inclined him towards.

Some studied religion and taught it, others devoted themselves to acquiring scientific knowledge, such as astronomy, the laws which governed their world, and the powers in operation in the universe. They were intimately acquainted with the productions and influences which so greatly overpowered the majority of the people, and were able to explain the nature of these said influences which held their fellow creatures in such an iron grip. They knew why they were so placed, and those who exercised faith recognised it as part of their religion to resist the strong allurements which always existed to succumb to these seductive fascinations. It was one of the promptings of conscience to avoid this temptation, for it was an unworthy pastime, and led to no beneficial result. They laboured with one end solely in view—eternal happiness; and they endeavoured to avoid everything that detracted their attention from their one ultimate expectation. They knew nothing about the eternity of the past and their previous existence, beyond the bare fact that their present inherent qualities clearly proved to them that they could not be changed, hence must have been and always would be the same. They satisfied themselves from their present condition that they were eternal souls, placed upon a material world for one purpose only. Those who sincerely

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believed in God, and in their ultimate reward for struggling to please the Master, did not hide this profession from their fellow creatures, but seemed to be increasingly happy the more they dilated upon the subject. Those who were in doubt, as well as those who did not understand the meaning of it all, frequently consulted their learned theologians, and from the fact that numerous different views upon religion were held by the people generally the further development of faith was greatly impeded.

This was the condition in which my informant found himself. His faith was tempered with a considerable amount of doubt, yet he yearned for some definite information that would appease the cravings of his soul ; hence, when in his doubtful moods, he would wander astray seeking forgetfulness and mental peace in the soothing enervation to be obtained from certain vegetable products of the soil. After satisfying himself to the full, he would still linger about until he was eventually compelled to return to civilisation and his pursuit after faith and good works.

His occupation when a youth had been to acquire knowledge, but being deficient in memory he could not become a reliable encyclopædia of information, hence he was cast aside, and ultimately degenerated into a wanderer of doubtful reputation.

Upon this particular world there were no animals of any kind known to my informant, hence there was no fear of encountering any wild beast, or reptile, or poisonous insect, when the idle wanderers bent their steps into the tangled jungle.

Little or no progress was made in agriculture, and no artificial help whatever was adopted in the shape of machinery or inventions. In domestic habits they were practically at a standstill, but where their advance was really manifest was in the higher mental attainments of the provident class, in their sciences, and in their improved and improving method of communicating with each other.

The line of demarcation drawn between the honourable and noble leaders of this world and the indolent class was clear and well defined. There was no confounding one with the other, and their professors recognised, from the fact of such difference existing between the various members of a race, all sprung from one common stock, that there must be some mystery somewhere to account for this terrible cleavage, so they devoted their attention to discovering it, and as a result had found the keystone of eternal existence, from which it was proved that the material test was exclusively to effect a separation in order that all might be happy in the eternity of the future.

My friend had now passed over into the spiritworld, and after careful examination of himself and a thorough investigation into the conditions which surrounded him he was fully convinced that he did possess some faith, and that this faith would in time lead him to Heaven. He was no longer swayed by contra influences; he had faith so developed that he could decide in earnest, but his habits were so dilatory and lacking in determination that he knew he would have a long, tedious road to travel before he attained perfection; still, it was a great satisfaction for him to know that he was upon the right road.

I thanked him for the very interesting account he had given me of the singular world from which he hailed, expressing at the same time a hope that he would soon be given a mission.

In return he emphasised his appreciation of the interview, stating that he had done his best to explain several matters of importance, and adding that he felt sure man would in time realise that existences such as he had described did actually inhabit a material world, with very great prospects of continuing to do so for a long time to come. He then bid me adieu, and rapidly disappeared in the distance, ascending in an oblique direction.

Minerva then came forward and remarked to me :—

“ Well, sir, you have just listened to a story which must appear very remarkable, indeed almost incredible to man in the present state of his knowledge. I selected this subject for the express reason that the account he would give of the conditions which maintained upon his world was unique in many respects, nevertheless, it carries with it great weight when one bears in mind the Justice of the Father. His reasons and methods are beyond anything man can conceive, so we are constantly being reminded of His eternally unlimited nature.

“ Now, sir, the way in which these people communicate with each other is not on a par with the advanced spiritual system, but is of a nature peculiarly its own, and essentially in keeping with the purposes of that particular world. These very attractive influences, which have been described to you as luring away the indolent and lazy section of the community, testify to a condition in which eternal instinct prompted them as a matter of course to develop their soul's properties. How, as a result of the very peculiar way in which evil is manifested upon this world, the good and faithful are almost naturally separated from those who are evil and opposed to good works. The separation, nevertheless, is effected just the same as it is upon the earth, but the method had recourse to is entirely different from any to which you have yet listened.

“ These people, you must remember, are of a distinct type from those tried upon the earth. They are placed upon a world governed by different laws, but subjected to temptations which are precisely equivalent to those which man has to undergo, for this universe is ruled by a Perfect Power, who metes out impartial justice to all according to circumstances and deserts.

“ The spirit you have just interviewed was one who could not decide between performing his legitimate duties and idling away his time in luxury. His eternal properties would not allow him altogether to follow the

latter course, but compelled him at times to draw up and remember that he possessed the power of faith. He would then return to civilisation, and for a time make strenuous attempts to develop it, so that when he crossed over into the spiritworld he discovered that he had succeeded in establishing his faith to an extent which would allow him to realise that he was capable of eventually being admitted into the Father's presence, after a long process of purification. He, through his unchangeable instincts, was foreordained, and thus chosen to be a member of the future world where God's true disciples alone are admitted, but he is a typical example of one who just comes up to the required standard, and this standard in his case, as in all others, has been attained through that remarkable power—Faith ! He was capable of exercising faith, hence by his life he has proved himself entitled to the reward which faith ensures.

“ There are very many spirits in the Second Sphere so situated, waiting to acquire knowledge in order to qualify for atonement.

“ I think, sir, that you have obtained all such information as I expected you would from your recent interview ; at any rate, you possess enough for our purpose, therefore I shall now leave you to return to your body at your leisure.”

Minerva then bowed to me and vanished.

By this time I had become quite exhausted, and could only remain in my spiritual form with great difficulty. My ambition also had deserted me now that the object of this visit was accomplished, so I returned to my body, and was soon greatly relieved from that persistent strain which slowly but surely overpowers my spiritual self, and draws me back to my body with such an attraction that the moment my work is over and my interest relaxed I long to return, and eventually am compelled to obey.

CHAPTER VII

A KNOTTY POINT SOLVED

January 19, 1903.—Once again I stood before Minerva after an interval of little more than four weeks.

On this occasion I met with an experience which was interesting from a physiological and generally scientific point of view, producing a result quite unlooked for by myself, and one which I think was equally as great a surprise to my instructors.

My last visit to the spiritworld had been prosecuted under very disadvantageous circumstances, and at the cost of great physical exhaustion, so that I was compelled for the time being to bring my explorations to a close.

For several days I had felt far from well, but now my indisposition had slowly made headway, despite my efforts to stem it back, until it had become a sheer mental and physical impossibility again to personate my spiritual form with any expectation of success.

Minerva informed me that this illness was due to exhaustion, resulting from the strain necessarily occasioned by my repeated visits to the spiritworld, but further explanation than this she did not vouchsafe to me, for she appeared to be almost at a loss herself to explain the immediately exciting cause.

From the date of my last visit I steadily grew worse and weaker each day for about two weeks. My head had a peculiar feeling of dull aching pain more or less all over, but most severe upon the crown and towards the back. My eyesight was considerably affected, my appetite had gone, beads of perspiration frequently stood upon my forehead, my heart was working badly, and my

pulse was beating ominously fast. Altogether I felt really ill and very despondent.

Minerva paid me a visit one night, and, after seeing my condition and listening to my dissatisfied remarks, informed me that she would attend to it at once, and forthwith disappeared. Shortly afterwards she returned with another spirit who, she stated, would restore me to health again. She then left me and vanished to her sphere.

The spirit whom she had brought to attend to my sickness was a powerful Fifth Sphere angel, whose mission it was to perform such work. I was much interested in both him and his mission, and several times tried to interview him, but he was proof against all advance, merely observing that he had nothing to say, that he knew perfectly well what was ailing me, that he did not work in the way in which an earthly physician would work, and that he intended to put me all right again.

Of course I anxiously waited for results. Next day there was no denying the fact that I felt somewhat better, and each succeeding day the improvement in every respect was noticeable, until physically I was myself again; but of course I could not say how my brain would be able to withstand the strain of another visit to the spiritworld.

During this illness I seldom conversed with any of my instructors, for the one requirement in my case which was necessary above all others was rest. Besides, my brain exhaustion was so complete that it would not allow me that mental calm so essential to the carrying into effect of any spiritual communication. Indeed, my brain was irritable and restless in the extreme.

After I became convalescent again, except for an indescribable dulness in my head, producing a very depressing effect, Minerva visited me one night and intimated that she was ready to resume work whenever I felt myself equal to crossing the abyss. She further observed

that she did not think a short visit to the spiritworld would be productive of any injurious result to my brain ; so it was then decided that the next evening I should be prepared to personate my spiritual form.

Although as Minerva's subject I certainly consented to this arrangement, still I perfectly dreaded the idea of again submitting myself to the tension absolutely necessary in order to remain in the spiritworld, produced by the great exertion required to resist the persistent efforts of my brain to draw me back. I endeavoured to persuade myself that the forthcoming visit was sure to be one which would do me good in several ways, and arouse me from the depression now continually felt. However, it was not a success ; my inner feelings were not to be fooled in such an impalpable manner as that, but still I kept on buoying myself up until the time came for me to prepare my brain for the undertaking. At last the moment arrived, and Louisa endeavoured to awaken my interest in the immediate future by informing me that she had received a message from Minerva intimating that, as this was the first visit after my illness, it would therefore only be of short duration, and that she intended, if possible, to explain to me something of importance in connection with her previous remarks concerning spiritual laws.

Despite such encouraging overtures, I seemed quite unable to exert my power to the extent of personating my spiritual form. Some part of myself rebelled and refused to become enthusiastic over such prospects. Nevertheless, after great and repeated efforts, I managed to command will-power enough to transport my properties. This accomplished, it was only to find myself when in the spiritworld deficient in interest and impulse, as well as discontented. In no mistake there was a flaw somewhere which prevented my spiritual form from awakening to the occasion ! I looked to Louisa for help and tried to pull myself together, but with only indifferent success. She in turn endeavoured to attract my

attention to the entrancing effect of being in space, to the stimulating influence of seeing other free spirits all around, and by pointing out to me the advantage and privilege I should consider it to be thus allowed a partial release from my material body.

This was the first occasion upon which I had really felt in such a deplorable state of prostration, but in my weary and somewhat forlorn condition I did my best to command my feelings ere we reached Minerva's presence.

Soon we were before her, and she, as usual, was waiting our arrival in calm dignity. Marian was also present at the left side of Minerva. We first noticed them some distance off as we slowly ascended to them in a slanting direction. Minerva greeted me with the customary polished spiritual salutation, so, likewise, did Marian, both stating that they were pleased that I was again able to be present among them. In return I thanked them severally, adding that my best efforts would be devoted to an adequate discharge of my duties, but that as yet I was not quite myself.

Minerva was emphatic in her observation that upon this occasion, being the first visit after my illness, she would not keep me long, at the same time expressing a wish that I should take my usual exercise in space with Marian.

We started off there and then, but I felt mentally exhausted and could not think of anything to commune upon, so we went some little distance without conversing. Marian then began by remarking how sorry she felt that I had been ill, especially as the sickness had been caused by severity of pressure upon my brain, resulting from spiritual work. She then branched off into general conversation of a nature usually interesting to us both.

Nothing of importance was mentioned in her remarks, but in some unaccountable way I suddenly felt easier, and all my weariness, as well as almost unbearable feeling of ennui, disappeared and was replaced by a sensation

of great relief, principally, if not entirely, in my brain. This remarkable and rapid change for the moment astonished me much, but while she was still conversing the reason dawned upon me why my head of late had felt so dull and exhausted in a certain locality, whereas now I experienced such a relief that forthwith I could take interest in the conversation. Nor was Marian long in the dark about my improved condition, for by my answers and otherwise different demeanour she very quickly detected what had taken place. She was equally surprised as myself, and of course naturally referred to the subject. She now saw clearly that my past brain trouble, and perhaps my illness, had been due to the change in the method of tutoring it, from that which had been exercised in the past by Marian herself to that which was now being pursued by Louisa.

It will be remembered that some weeks back Marian had been relieved of what had previously been her mission and given a more difficult one, her place having been taken by Louisa. Now one of the most, if not the most, important duties of this office was to superintend the development and education of those centres of my brain called into active operation when personating my spiritual entity, and now we both felt confident that even the very slight difference in kind of influence between Marian and Louisa had been sufficient to produce such a marked result. Personally I had no idea that these brain-centres were of such a delicate order as to be affected by this slightly altered treatment, but such had evidently been the case, for as soon as Marian began to converse with me the old connection between her influence and my brain's spiritual centres was again established. All strain and tension was then immediately relieved, for this was the first time that I had communed with Marian since all spiritual operations had been stopped at the outset of my illness, but not so with Louisa, which it seemed had but aggravated my brain the more.

Certainly Louisa is stronger willed, and a firmer spirit

in many respects than Marian ; but the latter informed me that she had been carefully trained previous to being entrusted with the work, hence it was evident that even the remaining irremovable slight difference in Louisa's spiritual treatment of my brain must have been sufficient to prejudice those nerve-centres which had been developed by Marian herself. The re-establishment of Marian's influence and power, even through such an unlooked-for channel as general conversation, had restored the previous sympathy, and thus undoubtedly had rectified matters. Indeed, I was now in a condition of such relief as almost to produce excitement.

After we had discussed the subject to the complete satisfaction of us both we returned to Minerva, who immediately took in the whole situation. She remarked that in my present unsettled mood it would be futile to discuss the object of my visit, therefore she would wait until the next occasion.

I then observed that I should like to have her explanation upon my past and present brain condition, as the whole business in this connection was a complete puzzle to me.

She replied that she would visit me after I had retired to my body and there explain matters.

We then slowly returned to my body, and my present feeling of exhilaration was in marked contrast to that in which I had so recently left it. Also, after I had retired into my body my entire condition was one of intense relief ; in fact, I felt my old self again, without any marked sensation of dulness in my head.

Presently Minerva was in attendance, prepared to give me her explanation of the phenomena so recently experienced. She began :—

“ Well, sir, we have now an abstruse and knotty problem to solve. There has, undoubtedly, been an obscure cause at work producing your recent illness. You must remember that these spiritual operations are carried on through very delicate organs, which hitherto in

man have been dormant. You, being the first to develop these advanced centres, have to rely implicitly upon superhuman assistance. The development has all been done for you, because it was not you who wished for this privilege, but it was I who imposed it upon you. Such being the case you know little or nothing about the inner workings in the development of your own brain, or the great complications necessarily encountered in the discharge of this work. Marian developed your brain herself in her own quiet and effective way. She took great pride in educating these particular centres so as to put you to as little inconvenience as possible. Then it so happened that after you were considered developed she was given another mission in an advanced direction, but essentially in connection with this investigation. Louisa was appointed her successor. She was initiated and instructed into the exact methods adopted by Marian previous to being given charge of your brain's spiritual properties, which are of a very superior and almost supernatural order. This change has had an injurious effect, though not through any fault whatever on Louisa's part, but through the slight difference in her methods. This produced considerable distress and overtaxation upon these extremely sensitive brain-centres. The change has been hurtful from the beginning, for your illness really dates back to that time. The effect was imperceptible at first, but increased as the cause was continued, until you were reduced to a state of enforced idleness. I obtained assistance and checked the downward tendency which was reaching a serious climax. You soon recovered to your normal state, save the weariness in your brain, which was instantly cured when you were in direct connection with Marian, whose own power penetrated into and immediately restored the lacking harmony in these particular centres. The relief to you was great, for it had been too long overlooked, and was not able to recover of itself under the existing circumstances. No one is to blame for this except myself, for I candidly

admit that I did not know of such a lesion existing in your brain. I looked in another direction for the explanation, but was mistaken. Personally I have never had much to do with the manipulation of your brain powers. Marian was the one in charge of that department, but she, being otherwise occupied, did not investigate the cause of your illness, and Louisa was doing her utmost to help you, but failed to detect the weak spot. Thus you see, sir, that your properties are complicated to such a degree that it has been extremely difficult to locate the discord, but, sir, you may rest assured that such a thing will not occur again."

Minerva, having thus explained matters, immediately left me to meditate upon my peculiar and not to be envied powers.

CHAPTER VIII

SPIRITUAL LAWS IN OPERATION

January 20.—To-night I feel quite equal to fulfilling my engagement to visit Minerva in the spiritworld, and listening to the observations she intends to make concerning the laws in operation in the spiritworld.

I was again in my immaterial form, and was welcomed by Marian and Louisa both. Without further conversation or delay we set out for our usual *rendezvous* with Minerva, proceeding at first very slowly. On all sides of us were to be seen spirits of one kind or another, evil being greatly in preponderance, but an appreciable number with some brightness around them were noticeable as we silently glided onwards in our course.

As the distance from the earth increased, so in like degree did the number of spirits we encountered grow less, until we arrived in a region of space which was all but clear of spiritual life.

Far away in front of us we beheld Minerva and the stranger awaiting our approach. We were travelling in a straight line towards them, and when we came to a standstill I found myself, as is always the case, exactly in front of Minerva, separated from her by only a short distance. At once I fixed my spiritual gaze intently upon her, and noticed that she occupied a slightly higher level than myself, and that she was already quite prepared to begin communications.

Marian, of course, occupied her usual position some distance away from me upon my left, and Louisa supported me upon my right. The stranger, solitary but

always striking, was behind Minerva and to her left, away in the distance.

Minerva began by conversing with me in a general way, but very soon she broached the subject which was then uppermost in her mind, and which she was about to explain to me :—

“ Sir, my intention upon this occasion is to convey to you a few useful and interesting general facts about the laws which are in operation over the various inhabitants of the spiritworld. I shall but briefly explain how some of these laws affect different classes of spirits, and that the very operation of such laws reveals the fact that only the faithful spirits who are working missions are God’s true followers.

“ A bright, faithful spirit working a mission is atoning for all his sins and shortcomings, so that in due time he attains to the required standard and is admitted into heaven, there to abide throughout eternity in perfect peace and happiness, together with all those of that class of souls who were thus foreordained by God on account of the love which they manifested towards Him during the past eternity. Whilst this spirit is in the spiritworld, undergoing the process of atonement, he is fully aware of this fact, hence his one ambition is to reach this exalted goal as soon as possible. Such being the case, certain laws, which cannot be infringed, are in operation to regulate the conduct and progress of this spirit. Law with spirits of this type operates as instinct does in man ! They are God’s true servants, hence it is contrary to their eternal nature to displease Him in any way whatever. God’s laws are laws of wisdom and harmony !

“ The laws which govern frivolous spirits are in numerous instances irksome to them. These spirits are most assuredly at liberty, but certain regulations are laid down for their observance which cannot be broken, for they are severely enforced by Omnipresence. The only trouble of any kind which these spirits give is of a frivolous nature. Frivolous attempts to infringe the

boundaries of the First and Second Spheres, and break for absolute freedom to go where they please, as a rule constitute the nature of the trouble constantly to be guarded against from this type of spirit.

“ But now let us consider the laws which hold evil spirits in check. The power of evilness, you know, is the extreme opposite to the power of goodness. It is ever ready to upset the power of God. It is just the same now as it was in the eternity of the past—ever seeking to win supremacy, individually and collectively !

“ In certain regions, but not in the region of your earth, are to be found untold numbers of evil spirits, who in the past eternity were extremely powerful ; so powerful, indeed, were some of their leaders that they were capable of accomplishing a great amount of hurt and mischief amongst many classes of souls, frequently influencing immense numbers of certain types to join them, then suborning their services temporarily in the prosecution of some scheme they had in view.

“ The Power of God was not law in the eternity of the past, for no distinction was discernible separating the different types of souls, so that God’s power of protection against these eternal mighty enemies of goodness was not then in operation as law, similar to what it is now in the spiritworld. And what is more, it could not possibly have been so, for no distinguishing feature then marked His followers from those subservient to the leaders of evil.

“ Of course these great captains of evil were not excepted in the trial of eternal souls. None are excepted. All are compelled to undergo subjection when their turns come. But so terribly powerful are these evil souls that they even make their eternal powers manifest through instinct to a pronounced degree during their confinement. Their existence in a material state is such that were man to conjure up his most intense ideas of concentrated wrath against the powers of goodness, he would fall far short in his reckoning of what actually does take place

whilst these powerful eternal ministers of evil are being held separate from their other properties, subjected, and overruled. The life of each one of these souls, during its existence in a material form, is strongly tinted with its true eternal power. After death, in the spiritworld, even in their ignorance of what was really their past existence, and of the precise nature of their powers, their eternal attributes will come prominently to the fore. The longer they continue in the spiritworld the more knowledge they acquire, for many of them are intelligently evil (which must not be confounded with evil intelligence), therefore so much the more dangerous do they become.

“These evil spirits are unceasingly striving to break the rules under which God has placed them. They enjoy freedom, of course, but are necessarily subjected to laws which prevent them from utilising their powers to overthrow God’s authority. For instance, numerous attempts have been made to upset certain laws affecting different material worlds, for the intention was by this means ultimately to subvert the equilibrium of the universe of worlds. Other similar attempts are incessantly being made, and as there are incalculable hosts of such spirits at the present age uniting in their efforts to bring time to an end, so that they may be freed to their eternal powers again, thus an idea may be formed of the quality of the power and the severity of the regulations brought to bear in order to restrain them. Thus, sir, from this circumstance alone the omnipotent authority of the Godhead is in a measure revealed. If but for a few moments Omnipotent Power were to be withheld in the control of these spirits, they would work such havoc as to upset completely all existing laws and requirements, so that terror would reign throughout the lowest two spheres—a state of affairs at present altogether unknown. These spirits are for ever on the look-out, and they act so quickly and so cunningly, singly and in vast numbers, that none save Omnipotence can hold them in check.

“The Great Just Father, when He took upon Himself

the responsibility of separating the eternal souls into various classes, knew full well what a herculean task was before Him, but He never once hesitated about undertaking it, because His Eternal Justice decided that it should be so. The work it has given Him is beyond computation, but His Power is Perfect, without any weakness anywhere, and immeasurably superior in every respect to that possessed by all the complete eternal souls. The trial of souls, therefore, requires but an exercise of Perfect Power. Apart from this, however, it reveals another important fact—that the Father loves His followers with a love surpassing comprehension, and in the manifestation of this love He has provided a means whereby all who exercise faith shall eventually enter His presence, and thus for all future eternity escape the jarring contact with imperfect souls.

“None but God’s true servants can accurately appreciate what He has done for all eternal souls. Man under subjection cannot possibly realise the extent of His love and justice—he is still in the test—but it is not until his soul is freed from bondage and again at liberty that he can see and learn it all for himself.

“Evil has ever been the enemy of God. In the past eternity, under the laws then in vogue, God could not restrict the evil souls, for all when in their complete forms are free; consequently, He proceeded to separate each one of them into two parts, thus rendering them powerless; and at the end of time, when they are freed again, He will ever afterwards have the power to restrict them within whatever bounds His Justice may prescribe, for He will then have authority to do so under a great eternal law.*

“I think, sir, it is not necessary to consider the laws in operation in the spiritworld beyond those generally applicable to the various classes of spirits. Still, you understand that these laws, whatever they may be, cannot be broken, for they are imposed by an Authority

* Elsewhere this law is fully explained.

who has a great purpose in view, and who must necessarily exercise His authority so long as time lasts, in order to accomplish the stupendous work He has undertaken for the benefit of all eternal souls.

“All spirits in this world, without any exception, are on the road to their zenith of happiness, which is an equivalent to the standard of their dormant eternal properties. Thus Omnipotence *judges* all souls in such a way that there can be no cause for complaint. The Great Father is a Just God, therefore He employs means of bringing about His ends in a just way. At the termination of the trial, when all the souls have been separated, and when all have found the level of their eternal properties, the great task which the Father ordained for Himself will have been perfectly accomplished—in every respect worthy of the Omnipotent King.

“It is certainly for the best that man in his present position cannot grasp it all, but when he has passed into the next stage, and when as a spirit he evinces the desire to acquire knowledge, he will find that he is then in a position to obtain information of such a nature that the more he learns so much the greater becomes his yearning to advance upwards and onwards towards the abode of Perfect Love.

“Sir, you have interviewed faithful spirits who have but recently arrived in this world. They have told you how they never tire of collecting whatever information lies within their reach, to satisfy their once trouble-stricken souls that they have emerged from the ordeal upon the right side, and are capable of advancing towards their Father, who, the more they know concerning Him, only increases in their estimation in Majesty and Love.

“Here, sir, I must come to a stop, for I have gone far enough in this direction. Indeed, my mission will not allow me to go further. Through it I have revealed the Godhead to man in a manner befitting his privileged position, but I feel it my duty to add that the information imparted by this mission is very limited in all respects

when compared with even my small knowledge of the Great Father. However, it must be remembered that man is not so endowed that he can receive more than a very curtailed amount of information concerning affairs which he cannot appreciate with his material senses. When I was entrusted with this mission I was informed of the reason why man cannot accept more than a glimpse of his God, but it is beyond the province of my duty to dilate upon it. Suffice it to say that when he occupies an advanced position he can then assure himself upon such points as this, for he will be so constituted that he can grasp what to him in his present condition is incomprehensible.

“Man certainly has been allowed information of an advanced nature compared with that which he previously possessed, but nothing more than what is his due. The Justice of God measured out the amount, and in doing so He allowed man sufficient knowledge so as to reveal Himself as He actually is, to an extent which He considered would suffice for the purpose He had in view. Man, however, need have no fear in his direst distress, for the Great Father knows everything, and will judge all with due consideration.

“Now, sir, I have finished the explanations I intended to make, therefore you are at liberty to return to your body whenever you feel disposed.”

Minerva then bowed to me, and turned to converse with the stranger.

After this remarkable interview I considered that a short tour through space would revivify my feelings somewhat, so Marian, Louisa, and myself set out at once, and traversed a portion of this region of the First Sphere. Presently we stopped, and I drank in with satisfaction the charms of space and freedom. Freedom, did I say? —not as long as my material body so continually asserts that as it cannot come to me so it is determined I shall not forget to return to it. I know the feeling so well, and it ever pursues my spiritual form with such dogged

persistency that I cannot escape from it even for a short time. What the happiness and peace of a faithful advancing spirit must be I can in a measure picture to myself, but in no respect realise, for I am unable even temporarily to abandon my material belongings. Such features are visible in all their actions and communications, and are also to be detected when I look upon their advanced forms. My inferiority is unmistakably pronounced all the time, especially when conversing with my instructors. They try to make everything as easy and smooth as possible for me, and their efforts are crowned with astonishing success, for harmony confronts me at every turn. I have no cause for complaint at anything that transpires in the spiritworld—indeed, the very opposite is the case, but upon my return everything is so different. The material body is so depressing and heavy, the brain so restricted and dull, that I am compelled carefully to consider its capabilities, and be cautious how I admit thoughts into it immediately upon my return, otherwise an undue excitement is aroused which greatly unsettles my mind.

On this occasion, after a pleasant and refreshing tour, we returned to my body, into which I entered with meekness and resignation.

Marian then approached me and stated that she would in future, until my explorations in the spiritworld were completed, regularly visit and commune with me, so as to keep my very sensitive mental organs in a restful mood ; and that when the object of their development had been attained they would fall into disuse and again become dormant.

CHAPTER IX

MAN'S POSITION IN THE UNIVERSE

January 24.—In the interview I now held with Minerva she explained to me man's true position in the universe, and the great honour done the world he inhabits as being the one upon which the Godhead decreed that He Himself should be restricted in a form similar to man, and under circumstances the reverse of comfort and affluence.

I was before Minerva, prepared to listen to whatever remarks she had to make. I surveyed her intently, and through my spiritual power of penetration I could read from her appearance that, no matter what might be the nature of the information she was about to impart to me, it was trivial to the knowledge she possessed upon the subject. And the perfect way in which she explained certain points to me corroborated to a nicety the opinion I had formed. She began :—

“Sir, the subject which I intend to explain to you this evening is one of importance, and will no doubt be of great interest to man when placed before him. It will be that of generally reviewing, from a spiritual aspect, the position man actually occupies in God's universe.

“Man upon earth is, as you very well know, undergoing the test. He is in a state of subjection, but he is quite unable to realise that such is the case, for he knows very little indeed about any other condition. His soul is his real and important self, and this soul is completely wrapped up in a material body. Man is given material senses ; he is strictly limited to time and distance ; his personal intellect is confined to a great extent to matter—indeed, entirely so, if not educated above it, and his

communicating powers are strictly within natural laws. Man's belief and the power of his faith are really the key to higher life, through which he can understand—alone understand—his future existence, and see the Great Father upon His throne, from which He rules the universe, as well as knows the merits of each individual man and spirit. From heaven He orders man upon earth. He decrees all operations which pertain to his advancement, not forgetting the great supervision necessary to provide him with sustenance. God of His knowledge selects the various souls previous to destining them to inhabit certain worlds. He also invests the soul about to be tested with a material body, and places it in a position of *Ignorance* and *Innocence* in order that it may begin its trial at *Purity*, from which it slowly manifests its eternal properties through the brain. He determines all deaths, and through His instigation the soul is freed from its bondage and restored to liberty in the spiritworld, where as a spirit it finds its equivalent position to its eternal properties. Man is in the great mill of God's imposing. Not one has occasion to complain ; be he faithful or faithless, good or evil, each one will eventually benefit by this great separation of the eternal souls.

“ Man in the past knew nothing about the power of God and His angels, and even up to the present day he is similarly situated. He had facts and statements before him which, if correctly construed, would have revealed God in His true eternal nature. But no man was capable of putting this puzzle together ; nay more, he did worse, he endeavoured to interpret these statements from a material, temporal, inferior standpoint. Man would not look to or follow his supernatural gifts and apply them to his religion. He determinedly clothed the simple teachings of Christ in such a garb as he thought would be consistent with his own matter-of-fact, material ideas ; and to this day, despite his remarkable advance, no effectual effort has been made to penetrate through

such erroneous covering. Man has never been able to return to the mainspring of his religion free from rites, dogmas, and theories, and believe only what he was taught by the Founder of Christianity—*simply faith and good works*.

Christ, the Life of the Godhead, did not except Himself from the trial of souls ; for as one of the integral parts of the Godhead He had decreed that all souls should be tested, therefore in justice to all He did not hesitate to undergo a like subjection, inasmuch as He was that part of the Perfect Eternal Soul which corresponded with that part of all the other imperfect eternal souls compelled to submit to material restriction. God selected this world, the Earth, as the one upon which to humiliate Himself. He had great and just reasons of His own for making this selection. His advent had been decreed by Omniscience to take place at the precise moment when mankind had reached a certain previously decided upon level of intelligence, for many weighty matters were depending upon this greatest of all subjections—the subjection of the Complete Power and Life of the Godhead.

“ Infinitely more souls than man can ever estimate were waiting for this event in a spiritual guise, and untold myriads of souls upon innumerable worlds were crying out for light, so that the work which Christ performed after His death—for death is but the material equivalent of the immaterial resurrection *—between His resurrection and ascension into Heaven again, was greater than any human brain can ever fathom. The one huge sphere of the then spiritworld was visited, and the souls there waiting were provided with a religion whereby they might ascend into Heaven. The spiritworld was completed in its entirety as a road to the new Heaven, and mighty spiritual works out of justice had to be performed upon all the other material worlds which were inhabited, so as to place their inhabitants upon an equal footing with all souls upon the earth and in the spiritworld.

* See Matthew xxvii. 53.

The whole existence of God's universe was changed from that of waiting to that of a magnificently complete arrangement from which advance could be made—to the Kingdom of Heaven.

“When all this work was finished, when the universe was completed, and when every soul undergoing the test upon every world, material or immaterial, was placed at an equal advantage, then Christ's mission from Heaven was ended, when He forthwith ascended through one sphere after another—Christ's own workmanship—and thus was the first to enter the new Heaven, prepared for all those who had been the loving adherents of God in the eternity of the past. Soon the fruits of the separation began to return to the Heavenly Father in the shape of those souls who had exercised faith through the test, who had atoned for their faults, and who had attained to a condition which entitled them to participate in the Perfect Reward promised them before the separation began. The increase has steadily grown greater until numbers now fail to enumerate those who have passed beyond and entered Heaven. The evil are left behind first, the frivolous next, and so on until none but those who through faith alone have reached the required standard can possibly enter Heaven, where for all the future of eternity they remain in the Glory of Perfect Power and Perfect Love.

“Christ, when He was upon the earth, was actually subjected to a many times greater test than any average man is. He descended from the highest of all eternal positions and filled one in which he was discredited and treated as the meanest of criminals. Christ could not explain to the people, to their edification, the real nature of His Father's Kingdom, hence He invariably turned any question directly referring to it. He almost exclusively confined His public teaching to parables and epigrams, for man's intellect at that time was not equal to the task of appreciating conditions which were so much advanced beyond his own. Christ performed

miracles and other works of love in order to impress the populace with the fact that He came with power and authority. He lived a humble life, and died the death of a malefactor :—such was the history of Christ on earth, who was the Life of the Godhead, and the Perfect equivalent of that life of which man is the earthly and visible representative.

“The treatment which Christ received was not one whit beyond what He expected ; nor yet did He entertain malice towards His persecutors, for if He had done so then some record of it would undoubtedly have been handed down to us. Nay, the Omniscience of the Godhead knew everything that would befall Christ long anterior to His appearing in bodily form upon this world, therefore could not be wrathful, but was ever the same. He was well aware of what would happen when He temporarily forsook His eternal abode and placed Himself at the mercy of selfish and evil men, for had they not been purposely so restricted for a great reason ? In those days there were no angels upon whom the eternally good could rely for assistance and thus protection, for it was not until Christ ascended into Heaven that the Father, at His request, bestowed upon man universally the Power of the Holy Ghost, especially in the form of the Spirit of Truth—for then was the time when the Kingdom of Heaven came upon them all. The life of the soul is the portion undergoing the test, hence it was Christ—the Life—who had the supervision of the test, and whatever was required in the conduct of this test Christ had but to ask—the Power—for and it was immediately granted.

“Your world is surely a privileged one, for has not Christ Himself been subjected upon it ? Did the Omniscience and Justice of the Father not select this particular world for such purpose in preference to all others ? The honour therefore granted man is greater than he at present is aware of. The Great Father had His own All-wise reasons for ordaining your world to be thus

privileged. It is not by any means the world most advanced towards Him in knowledge. It is not inhabited by the very best types of souls, nor yet is it tenanted by evil souls of great power, but it is occupied by the great and numerous average types of souls—those whom God is very desirous should evince faith and so live with Him in Heaven. They are the wanderers and waverers of the past eternity. They are the class which require the most attention and judicious management. Their eternal indifference has made itself pronounced through the material brain, hence, instead of advancing steadily towards God in religion, they are most backward in this respect at the present day. This condition is due entirely to the eternal instincts of free-will and knowledge between good and evil forcibly making themselves manifested. Man has interested himself more in his daily works and material prosperity than he has in his future eternal welfare, therefore, through the operation of certain laws regulating advancement, he has been allowed continually to advance nearer his God in his daily works. His religion, whatever it was, was either sincerely believed or persistently doubted. He has not that same yearning to make headway in affairs pertaining to his soul's welfare as he exhibits in material concerns, the result being an anomalous condition, where science has outstepped religion. However, God in His justice and love to all souls determined to remedy this rapidly increasing deficiency, and selected myself as the means through which man should obtain such further knowledge as would place him in a position to appreciate the circumstances that called for his soul's material subjection.

“Man upon the earth is in many respects his own master, and thus he regulates his progress by his ambitions. Hence, in consequence of possessing his particular distinguishing eternal traits, he is but now being brought face to face with this advanced information, which would have been allowed him in the past in accordance with

the law regulating the granting of the most prominent desires had he but shown sufficient eagerness upon this subject.

“Man upon your world is so heavily weighted by bodily subjection that his aspirations in a religious sense have been literally smothered by the material interpretations which he could not avoid placing upon his religion. He has proved himself utterly incompetent to brush aside the various obstructions placed in his way, and to begin anew upon the right road towards knowledge of God, hence now he is compelled to acknowledge that he has been trying to escape a recognition of the immaterial mysteries of his religion by investing them in material garbs, or banishing them entirely from his thoughts as out of all keeping with the commonsense laws of material existence.

“It will not take him long to see and admit his mistake, his restricted position, and hence his inability in the past to construe religion aright. Now he will be brought face to face with his God in a tangible, rational way, with such suddenness and in such a simple and understandable manner that he will actually be dumfounded—in scepticism at first, in compulsory conviction next, then at his own remarkable dulness and dependence in not having been able to find out at least something for himself; for in the human race there are very many men of great intellect, but yet not one has thrown any real light upon religion in the proper direction.

“Man has no occasion to consider that he has been at all neglected. The reason for his present distorted ideas upon religion lies at his own door, not individually but collectively, for he has been allowed to progress in those directions in which he evinced the greatest desire to progress. His knowledge will be greatly increased when once he has read and considered these communications. He never can go back to his old ideas, for once enlightened always enlightened. The road in front of him reveals no obstacles, but a steady advance in super-

natural knowledge—knowledge which will hereafter increase at rapid strides, for much is before him to learn once he recognises supernatural life, understands the basis upon which the soul in its higher estate exists, and admits the Power of the Father and the Love He bears towards all those whom He is subjecting.

“I think, sir, sufficient has now been said to disclose to the human brain the true position of man in this great universe. All are equal in God’s eyes, from the lowest and most unprivileged in the land to the personage of the most exalted rank and fabulous wealth, therefore, whosoever is anxious to advance towards God will do well to consider and abide by the laws of religion—*and do good works towards his equals in God’s eyes, if not in his own.*”

CHAPTER X

VALUABLE INFORMATION FROM A POWERFUL SPIRIT

January 26.—My next visit to the wonderful spiritworld was productive of very satisfactory results, for I interviewed an intensely powerful spirit, engaged upon another world in the discharge of a mission similar to that which Minerva was now working upon this one. Minerva had conducted him to our usual *rendezvous* in order that I might listen to a few remarks from him upon a subject not hitherto approached.

Previous to my crossing over into the spiritworld I had been informed by Marian that several spirits were then with Minerva awaiting my arrival.

As soon as possible I personated my immaterial self, and was conducted whither they were all assembled. As we rapidly advanced I saw that we were going straight towards a group of bright spirits, who appeared like so many brilliant lights in the distance. We stopped when we neared them, Marian, Louisa, and myself. Of course I at once instinctively looked for Minerva amidst this charming group in front of me, but to my astonishment she was nowhere to be seen.

A bright and powerful spirit now slowly descended from the small assemblage, for they were upon a slightly elevated plane above us, and with stately mien advanced towards myself. He halted about fifty feet away, and then at once began to address me.

This deliberate behaviour rather surprised me at first, for upon all previous occasions Minerva had invariably opened the interview when important communications were about to be imparted to me. I knew in a moment

that Minerva had reasons of her own for such a procedure, therefore I listened without hesitation to the observations made by this bright spirit now facing me. He was very powerful and very bright. Through my spiritual instinct I perceived that he was performing an important mission, for his very appearance betrayed the power and intelligence of one whose duty it is constantly to utilise such properties. The other spirits who were in the group behind him I knew nothing about. They were seven in number, all busily conversing with one another as I turned to inspect them to the best of my ability. The moment the spirit in front of me began his observations the others forthwith stopped all converse and assumed an attitude of respectful attention. He then began :—

“Sir, I am present here at the request of your worthy superior, who has informed me of the great work she has on hand, and of the difficulties which this work entails. She has explained to me the exact position in which man is placed upon the world to which her mission takes her, and I consider the situation a very interesting one indeed. In several respects the conditions are essentially different from those which exist upon the world whereon I am engaged. However, I shall explain to you the nature of my duties as well as those of my helpers. Some of them you now see here ; they have followed me—a course they always pursue when I am on duty. The general outlines of my mission and the present position of the inhabitants of the world whereon my work occupies me I shall review from the standpoint in which I regard them whilst executing my mission.”

At this point Minerva arrived on the scene, and without delay presented herself immediately in front of me ; at the same time the visitor, who was in the act of addressing me, retired somewhat in order to allow her to explain matters to me.

Minerva then commenced in her wonted collected manner :—

“ It is your privilege upon this occasion, sir, to interview a very important spirit, who is working a difficult mission upon another world. He is entrusted with great responsibility and power, and has acquired a vast amount of knowledge in the direction in which his duties call him. He will tell you whatever he thinks necessary. The information which he will impart to you may not at the present time be of much interest to man, but at some future date he will prize it at its true value. This spirit is fully acquainted with man’s present position, as well as the amount of information about to be disclosed to him, for I have described the entire situation to him. He will explain certain points which one in his station alone can explain. It is for this reason, over and above the fact that he is an outsider to our workings, that I have considered it most advisable that he himself should tell you what he has to say rather than that you should hear it second-handed, as it were, from me. I certainly had my reasons for allowing him to commune with you first, which are important, but perhaps unnecessary to refer to, beyond stating that I wished him to establish his power over you at the beginning of the interview, for what he is about to acquaint you with will require some explanation, and thus the strain will be less severe upon yourself. You need not ask him any questions, for he knows exactly the nature of this business and its requirements ; nor yet is there any necessity for an interpreter, for his knowledge and power are sufficient to enable him to explain himself clearly to your restricted brain, since his duty entails a similar system of communication to that in which he is now about to engage. He is a spirit of exalted attainments, although only in the Fourth Sphere ; his followers are from the Third Sphere. These are the remarks that I wished to make to you, sir, therefore you are now at liberty to resume your interview with our estimable visitor.”

Minerva having finished her observations, retired a short distance, and my new acquaintance then advanced

and occupied the position she had vacated. He was perhaps fifty to seventy-five feet in front of and slightly above me. Minerva was at his left side, considerably nearer to him than myself. The followers of this evidently important spirit were behind and to his left, upon a still higher level. Marian and Louisa were behind me, one on either side—Marian upon my left and Louisa upon my right.

The power of this spirit was distinctly great, and when he addressed me it felt equally as powerful to impress as Minerva's ; at any rate, his ability to hold my attention fixed upon his remarks was very strong indeed. When once he began his observations in earnest he did not again stop, but slowly continued his narrative until he had told all that he intended to say. But little effort was required on my part to take in all his communications, hence I did not subsequently suffer from the effects of over-taxation of my brain. He resumed :—

“ Well, my friend, I have been made acquainted with the reasons for your presence in this world ; they are both interesting and remarkable ! Man upon the world you inhabit is in a very different position to his equivalent upon the world I am interested in. I know this latter world well, and my duties take me all over it. My mission is worked in such a way that the inhabitants do dimly recognise that there is some power helping them, but they know very little indeed of the true state of affairs. Man upon the world of which you are a native is a very cautious being. His ambition to advance in his religion has not made itself manifest in his midst to nearly such a degree as it has amongst the subjects of my mission. This fact is an exceedingly interesting one, for the subjection is almost exactly the same upon both worlds ; and what is more, the classes of souls are all but alike ;—both are those types who are eternally slow to decide, but when once a decision has been arrived at that decision is adhered to. They are both the best examples of average intellectual, solid, and trustworthy

souls. Of course, sir, you understand that I allude to the souls in question as a body, hence exceptions are not uncommon. But advance is ruled by the opinions and actions of the majority. The manifestation of eternal properties made prominent through this majority overrules the whole, while progress in its turn invites and encourages the development of these eternal properties. Thus they all advance through their own desires and works, but permitted and incited to do so by the Great Eternal Father.

“Man upon the world which is your test-ground has advanced differently from man upon that world whereon I am interested. Upon the former he is possessed of a wide range of intelligence—from dense ignorance to great knowledge. This unevenness has its causes, but we are not here to discuss that question. However, this unevenness, as evidenced upon the earth, has resulted in a general backwardness as compared with the condition that maintains in the region which I know so well and love to talk about, for I am initiated into its very secrets, its joys, its drawbacks, its weaknesses, and everything connected with it, for it is my mission, hence my duty to know all.

“The latter world is more evenly advanced generally. The intelligence of its inhabitants in some respects is behind that which is perceptible upon your earth, and in others it is greater ; but its most pronounced advancement and pride is its ever-growing knowledge of God and of the future existence. The souls undergoing the test there do not know any more than is about to be disclosed to man upon earth. What they do know they have acquired under great difficulties ; and after long and strenuous perseverance they have now established it, with help from spiritual sources, upon such a refined basis that the majority of their leaders can quickly detect when any information they receive does not originate from a proper and reliable source. They have now mastered the abstruse problem of their religion,

after steady determination and innumerable conflicts with common sense and material ideas. The source from which they have received and do now receive their information about God and eternal life is through the mental prompting of their spiritual guides, or from one which is communicated to them through the same channel. One small item of importance is received at a time, and this has frequently to be sifted from a superabundance of incorrect or injurious matter ; but the ever watchful Father does not abandon His followers in their struggles for more light and knowledge, therefore He commissioned a powerful spirit with other helpers to watch over them in their efforts to detect the right from the wrong. I am a successor to that spirit sent long ago. Certainly, the work now being performed is not nearly so great as it was under the mission of my first predecessor, nevertheless I am compelled to be continually on the watch, for the inhabitants are very numerous. They are not all equally advanced, and those who are the most highly endowed act as leaders. The population is scattered promiscuously all over this world, hence in certain localities the people are in a great measure ignorant of the works and progress of their religious advisers. Thus my duty is, as you may reasonably infer, to protect these isolated and less advanced inhabitants from being occasioned undue annoyance and difficulty by information prompted from untrustworthy spiritual sources.

“I must observe that spiritual communion is not allowed to all the inhabitants, but only to those who are naturally gifted in this respect. These privileged persons develop their powers, but for all that it is only occasionally that they receive inspirations from an authentic source, and not unfrequently long intervals elapse without any revelation of importance forthcoming. None are gifted with the power to converse with spirits as perfectly as you do, nor can any assume forms like the one you possess at present ; but the principle upon which their

advancement has been achieved is steadily to forge ahead, stopping at no obstacle.

“All the people do not interest themselves in this work, for, indeed, some are quite indifferent about it, while others are unceasingly trying to upset the general spiritual progress by promulgating false ideas. There are many, very many, interfering agencies at work to obstruct them in their progress in knowledge of God, but the leaders never waver in their efforts to advance. When unnecessary information, or when what seems like important false information, or when information of an unacceptable nature is laid before the various authorities in different localities for their discussion and decision upon, I am always present with power to impress them, which power I exercise with great circumspection and bring it into operation in their deliberations, when necessary, by gently persuading them not to accept such and such information, nor add it to their hard-earned store of valuable facts. Wherever the information comes from, and whatever its nature, if it be rejected as non-genuine or valueless, it is never lost sight of nor destroyed. It is relegated for consideration by certain professors whose duty it is to compile such information in its proper classification, either as emanating from base sources or untrustworthy until further proof is forthcoming.

“The records which these people have compiled, as containing true information about eternal affairs, as well as of spiritual laws and existences, are essentially correct and very acceptable to the yearning human soul, nevertheless they are of such a nature that they lack that depth of meaning and solidarity which is so pleasing to the spiritual mind ; nor yet is it within my power to increase or at all correct the various items of information they receive. Knowledge thus slowly and carefully increased is the surest way of erecting a firm superstructure, until at this present time, as I have already stated, certain educated inquirers have advanced so far in the study of

the occult that they can at once detect what is genuine and what is spurious information :—in this particular direction of mental development is to be found the key to that world's present advanced position !

“ Man upon the earth is very backward in this respect, I understand, but this defect is counterbalanced by the great knowledge in various departments of science which he possesses—they are but branches from religion. Whereas upon the world from which I come the people display very little anxiety after such matters, inasmuch as their inherent properties urge them on to make religion their most necessary attainment.

“ With us the distinction between different classes of people is in all respects very pronounced. The intelligent faithful man associates with none save his like, and is always extremely interested in the ever-increasing knowledge he is acquiring. The evil man, as a rule, exists in constant fear of his superiors, but there are some who are ever seeking stealthily to mix with the faithful and cause trouble, which is their delight. In any one locality are to be found all the various types of mankind, but they do not associate in the same free-and-easy way that man does upon the earth, for the increased knowledge upon religious matters which they now possess has completely altered the previous state of society. Knowledge and developed senses cannot fail in the long run to be productive of such result !

“ The occupations and privileges enjoyed by the people upon this world are very similar to those possessed by man upon earth, but their scientific attainments are not so great. They have acquired a great insight into the laws of natural occult personal powers, yet there are but few who are willing to devote their attention to a cultivation of these powers, for when once they are developed and understood then the various types of inferior spirits are ever surprisingly anxious to acquaint man with their views upon any and all topics. Frequently serious results would have happened if my predecessors and myself had

not possessed power to prevent such obtrusions—serious, inasmuch as interfering powerful spirits would, by their influence over certain men, cause great general excitement among the people through the exercise of their supernatural power. Omnipotence would not allow any such interference with the natural laws ordained to regulate that world's conduct, for through His Omniscience He knew what would ultimately happen to man when ignorantly dealing with supernatural spiritual powers, therefore He sent my predecessors, who, working their redemption under the laws of God, knew through the power of their mission when disturbances were brewing, if not in active operation.

“God executes all His commands in the spiritworld through His followers working out their atonement. Their power and knowledge must be equal to the task allotted them, therefore selections of spirits are made for the most important offices. In accordance with this necessary provision, it has been my lot to be entrusted with a very important mission. I had acquired a great amount of knowledge previous to being thus authorised. My followers, also, are very well posted in all matters pertaining to the proper discharge of their various duties. I have very many more helpers under my charge than these you see here, and they are nearly always engaged in one direction or another. Whenever I visit the world upon which my attention is centred, those of my assistants who at that time are disengaged accompany me in case their services may be required. I know every district of that world well ; each separate locality has its own peculiar weaknesses, and it is my greatest delight to traverse its surface and witness its slow but steady advance.

“Some of the most highly endowed and cultured men recognise me through their feelings as I pay them my periodical visits. They are unable to communicate with me, but they know my presence as well as they do that of a friend. This sensitive property, however, is not a

pronounced acquirement throughout the privileged class. Many have but a vague idea that some power is present, but none of them know for certain that they are thus watched over and protected; still, they realise in their progress the influence of an invisible superior power.

“It is also very interesting to me to watch the older hands disappear one by one from their positions as principals, and see the younger ones as a matter of course step into the shoes of their elders. Not unfrequently I have made it my business to reveal myself to certain of these principals in the spiritworld in whom I had taken great interest, and have communed with them in their freed condition. The surprise they evince at their new existence is always great, and their happiness and satisfaction are almost unbounded.

“Thus I work among the inhabitants of that world, unseen but not unfelt; but, sir, I cannot enter into further details, for your endowments are not such that you can comprehend all that my duty requires. I am a spirit entrusted with great power, and I judiciously weigh my plans before ever attempting to carry them into execution.

“Man upon the earth will soon be in possession of information which will place him in a very difficult position, but still no more so than that which those men were called upon to face who lived upon the world I have been discussing at the time when the great upheaval occurred, consequent upon the first genuine information received relative to spiritual existence, and from that date they have steadfastly fought their own way to their present position.

“My one endeavour is to know man as he behaves when brought in contact with other souls in more advanced bodies. In such contact man is by no means placed in an easy position, and but few are really capable of mastering the situation. Of course, the greater the knowledge of supernatural existence the simpler it is

for man to explore by means of his supernatural senses. Indeed, there are certain worlds which have advanced to the elevated position of free communion between man and spirit. Such exalted attainment is about the limit of material advancement in that direction. It will not be very long before the world upon which I discharge such an important mission will have arrived at that eminence, for from henceforth their increasing knowledge will gain momentum rapidly.

“Now, my friend, I have briefly referred to the various points which your superior requested me to explain, and in this respect I have nothing more to add. I shall in the future take deep interest in the world from which you hail. There will undoubtedly be a great upheaval when man is abruptly awakened to such (to him) remarkable advanced knowledge. Still, he ought to be and will be sincerely thankful to the Ever Just God that he has not been neglected among the innumerable worlds which have to be considered. The Father overlooks no world ! nor a single soul !—and no spirit knows this better than I do, for I am working God’s will continually.”

My learned and dignified informant now slowly retired in the direction of his followers, and then they all very soon vanished.

Thereupon Minerva came forward, and observed :—

“Sir, this spirit, being engaged upon a very noble mission, is intimately versed in every detail anent the intercommunication of man and spirit. He has given you information which is really of great importance, although, perhaps, it is not exactly what man requires at present. However, in the distant future it will be of value, as it is an outline of the workings of man and spirit upon a world which has acquired its own knowledge in this respect.”

Here the interview terminated, and my visit was brought to a close, so I returned to my body to rest my weary brain.

My late informant never mentioned the name of the world from which he came, and he did not give me an opportunity to ask him. He was very methodical in all his manners and actions. He approached me with superb dignity, delivered his charge in a matter-of-fact way, in one continuous current, and then withdrew, not permitting me to question him at all.

CHAPTER XI

MAN SEEN FROM BEHIND

February 14.—My last visit to the spiritworld brought with it the necessity for a rest. It is beyond the power of human endurance to keep up this high-pressure work very long. The act of personating my spiritual form excites certain parts of my brain into activity, to try and counteract the abnormal situation thus created. When I hold an interview in the spiritworld the strain is usually great, for not only have I carefully to attend to what is being said, but my brain has to receive and then accept or reject whatever information it chooses. At the same time another section of my brain is violently tugging at me to return, so that a further expenditure of power is necessary to oppose this terrible attraction.

I am fully aware that those of my brain powers which enable me to personate my spiritual form are slowly but surely playing out. Each visit I feel the pressure getting worse, and now, after a series of a few visits, my exhaustion upon return is extreme, and were it not for the assistance and soothing influence I receive from Louisa my discomfort would be almost unbearable. The powerful healing angel whom Minerva called in to assist me medically, as it were, is now continually with me, repairing any flaws resulting from over-tension of the delicate spiritual properties of my brain during my extraordinary visits to the spiritworld ; and both this angel and Louisa bolster me up and prepare me for my next undertaking. At times it is almost impossible for me to pull myself together sufficiently to muster either courage or determination to personate my spiritual form. My entire

physical system seems to rebel at the very thought of being left for so long to take care of itself, and is now more or less openly asserting its intention no longer to be treated with such deliberate neglect.

Whatever are the pleasant and charming associations which my spiritual entity enjoys in space, and however disregarding for a short time it may be of each reminder to return, still, all the satisfaction which would otherwise accrue from my visits is negated by the intensity of the effort, physical and mental, required both before I visit the spiritworld, when I am there, and upon my return. I feel as if it is beyond my capacity to get inured to such work without encountering severe drawbacks all the time; and, what is more, I cannot close my eyes to the fact that the time is not far distant when it will be an utter impossibility for me any longer to cross the stream and regale myself with the unutterable charms of space and the lofty associations always to the fore when mingling with exalted and beautiful spiritual companions.

The three weeks' rest I had now taken had been considered absolutely necessary by Minerva, but during the whole respite I was seldom free from a dull, exhausting sensation present in my head weighing me down. Then I was called back to duty again upon what I had a strong conviction would be my last series of visits to the spirit-world.

Upon this occasion, after summoning up sufficient energy and decision, I personated my spiritual form, and as soon as I awakened to a spiritual knowledge of things I beheld Marian and Louisa before me, then, forthwith, we all set out for Minerva's presence.

My journey through space between the two places of course awakened in me the same old feelings; and however frequently I may have referred to them on previous occasions, and however much I may wish to convey to the mind of any reader an impression of what space actually is like, even to my anomalous form, I am fully

sensible that I have utterly failed to disburden my mind to its satisfaction of the reality of the sensation.

All too soon, as far as my feelings were concerned, we arrived before Minerva. She was alone, majestic in her power and meditative in her appearance. Behind her, at some considerable distance, awaited the faithful Achates in the shape of the stranger.

What a picture was thus presented to my gaze !—amidst the silence of eternal space, nothing but space, absolutely pure space, there stood poised a mass of brightness, power, and knowledge, unutterably beyond any human form which has existed, does exist, or will exist upon any material world !—Alone !—a powerful, beautiful, holy messenger from the Omniscient Eternal Father, bringing tidings of joy and love to those His devoted followers who in the past eternity were true and unswerving in their allegiance to Him, amidst all the heterogeneous combinations of concentrated evil, hatred, and independence ;—fulfilling His promise in His own way, to take them all, by themselves alone, to live with Him in peace, happiness, and purity, for ever and ever continued after time is no more.

Was ever such a sight beheld by human eyes ? Has ever human mind been capable of grasping the barest outline of God's ineffable love to man ? What will human conception itself display when it knows the great and naked truth ? These are questions which flash through my brain as I pen these lines, knowing so well the invincible reality of it all, and having through self-abnegation and determination, assisted by Omnipotent power, seen it all for myself to the edification of others, and I say it is grand, superb, majestic—worthy of the King of Kings !

We stopped in front of Minerva, and, after our usual greetings were performed, she began :

“ Sir, we are always pleased to welcome you on a return to your duties for everybody's sake. This is a great work !—it benefits me, it benefits my helpers, it

benefits you because it is your life's work, and it benefits every man upon earth. But as this is your first visit here after a rest we must conduct our business with expedition, and not waste time when it might be usefully spent. It would not be wise to put you to exhausting work upon this occasion, so I have determined that we shall make a tour of inspection on the earth, the actual surface of the earth, and there you shall see man as he is really visible to a spirit ; and your next engagement will be to interview that spirit who acted as interpreter upon a world you visited some time ago, and with whom agreement was then made that you should interrogate her when the proper time came. It will necessitate your going to that world in order to fulfil your engagement, hence it will be our duty to husband your power.

“ In our explorations this evening we shall visit a region of the earth which is not now at rest, so that you will be able to get a glimpse of man from behind, as he is to be seen in his everyday life. Although you will behold him from a spiritual and higher aspect than any he himself knows about, still there will not be much that you will be able to understand. You will, however, be in a position to form an idea of the difference between man and spirit from a spiritual standpoint. You will then have witnessed a sight which no man who has ever been upon the earth has had the privilege of seeing before. Notwithstanding the fact that man exists in the midst of such a remarkable combination of forces, yet he is entirely ignorant of the true nature of his higher self. It is not a sight which in any respect is elevating, still we must not forget the fact that it has been decreed by Omnipotence that man should be as you will see him. Man is perhaps best off in his ignorance of himself, but increasing knowledge is ever a prominent feature of civilised humanity, hence now it is necessary that he should be informed of what he is like when seen from behind.

“ Now, sir, if you are ready we will go. We shall start

this expedition from your body, so let us forthwith repair thither."

During this last remark we began moving towards my body.

As quick as thought we were prepared to set out upon this exceptionally interesting expedition, Minerva upon my right, Marian upon my left, and Louisa following. These respective positions we severally occupied until our return to my body.

We travelled through space for a short time, but not with extreme rapidity in the spiritual sense. Soon we slackened our speed, which in a human sense had no doubt been terrific, and I noticed that we were descending earthwards in an inclined direction, towards a dense and tumultuous crowd.

We came to a sudden stop, and found ourselves evidently in a busy thoroughfare of some town, but where I had not the slightest idea. I looked about me as carefully as I could, and beheld a sight the like of which of course I had never witnessed before, nor yet had I ever imagined that such a phantasmagoria could possibly exist.

First of all, and what attracted my attention most, there were countless numbers of spirits of various kinds and degrees, on all levels, flitting hither and thither with grace and harmony in their movements, all keenly upon the alert or else occupied with man one way or another. They were nearly all above the surface line of the earth, but a few were also noticeable beneath it. I looked then to behold my fellow creature—man! Without any mistake he was there! I knew him the moment my gaze rested upon him, but oh! how different in appearance from anything he sees or knows about himself. The whole *mêlée* was a moving panorama of man and spirit—mostly poor ignorant man and cunning wicked spirit!

Such was the throng and mix-up that I could not get a satisfactory view of man, and the effect this excitement was producing upon me was anything but pleasant.

A

We moved slowly onwards, and abruptly stopped close beside a solitary man sitting at a desk, evidently writing, in a recess of a small, scantily furnished room.

I looked at this man intently, he all the while being wholly absorbed in his occupation, and most certainly he had not the slightest knowledge that a powerful angel, three bright spirits, and myself were overlooking him. I then cast a glance around in search of spiritual presence. One rather bright spirit I recognised not far removed from this man, probably his guide ; also, a few shady spirits were discernible some distance away.

These spirits, as I gazed first at them then at this man, impressed my spiritual nature as being the more substantial forms of the two. In general outline the man resembled in a measure the appearance he presents to the material eye, but in other respects there was a great difference. The substance of which he was composed was denuded of its ordinary solid appearance, that is, of course, if I did actually see the substance. I was not able to see through him, for I knew that there was something in his composition which was denser than space, yet nothing so substantial as the spirit beside him.

More than this I could not learn, so I bent my attention in other directions. I could easily define the walls of the room, but in no sense did they appear as solid barriers. I could see through and beyond them a short distance, and the appearance they generally presented was in all respects similar to the substance of the earth as beheld by a spirit—transparent, but not as clear as space. There was the unmistakable presence of something more than the elements of space, and the very presence of this something had its effect upon me. I knew and felt that I was not now in free space, but in the midst of a condition which was bounded by limits, therefore temporary. The difference in effect between being in my present position and in unobstructed space was not very great, but quite sufficient to draw my attention to that difference.

Minerva the while was silent—silent and watchful—waiting for me to form my impressions of man before she interposed with any observation.

“At last, sir,” she remarked, “you have beheld man from behind the material screen, from a spiritual aspect. You gather that in general outline he is similar to what he is when seen from the human side, but still you perceive that there is a great difference? He does not appear as solid as you are accustomed to see him. You do not view him now from a material aspect, for, as you know, matter is not visible as such to a spirit. What you do at this moment principally behold are certain powers which are present in every man but not visible to the material eye. They are man’s supernatural forces—his spiritual powers—which are essential to the proper discharge of his corporeal functions, for matter itself is of course inanimate and inorganic. That such is the case is easily proved, for were it that you only saw the material of which man is composed he would be semi-transparent as that wall is, but you cannot see through him, thus proving that it is his spiritual properties that you now behold. The contrast in appearance between spirit and man is very marked, as you will see when you go into their midst, for a spirit has the appearance of an altogether superior existence to a man.

“Now, sir, you see this man in front of you? Well, we shall read his life and learn what sort of a man he is! You detect the light of faith he possesses over his form?”

I certainly saw a light above his head, not brilliant, but light that was distinguishable.

“That, sir, is the ‘power of faith.’ He is a faithful man, he believes, although he cannot grasp the greatness of the King he hopes some day to live with in Heaven. This man is a true sample of a servant of the Godhead. His obedience to Omnipotence is so thoroughly ingrained in his instinctive powers that it is now manifesting itself, and will manifest itself more and more until he ends his

earthly career. He has not an easy life by any means. Troubles and anxieties beset him at every turn. He is honest, and works as an honest man should work, in earnest and in hope, studiously avoiding worldly sin. He is the type of man I most greatly like to behold—he is sure to end his troubles upon the right road to Heaven ! ”

I thought what a grand forecast for any man to hear of himself, especially when it was volunteered from such a source—from a power who had accurate knowledge upon such an important topic, but incomprehensible to man.

The subject of our analysis still kept on writing, and little idea had he of the nature of the group that was around him, and, if it were possible, even less had he any knowledge that such a soul-inspiring horoscope had been read for him.

I knew that it would be quite impossible for me to arouse him, but the inherent curiosity of man impelled me to approach and endeavour to awaken him to a knowledge of his surroundings ; still, despite my best immaterial efforts, he never took the slightest notice of me, nor made the least indication of mental disturbance at all.

It was extremely difficult for me to realise, even after I had proved it to be the case, that I was standing right in front of a man, and yet, notwithstanding my numerous and strenuous efforts, I could not attract his attention, but such was an undeniable fact.

I turned to Minerva again and asked if all men appeared as this one did, so dull, so leaden, so restricted, and even so degraded—for such was now my opinion of man.

“ Indeed, sir ! Why do you ask me such a question when you know perfectly well that all men are the same, the difference between any two being only one of degree ? But now that you have satisfied yourself so far, let us go elsewhere and see others, then you can better judge for yourself.”

We moved slowly, on purpose I think, going straight through the walls without the slightest difficulty or obstruction. We then proceeded into the open, and were evidently in a busy locality. We gracefully glided up what appeared to me like the middle of a street. At the same time I noticed that we were not exactly upon the line of the earth's surface, but a few feet above it.

Here was a sight that riveted my attention for some moments—the two akin existences, man and spirit. What a peculiar and even melancholy spectacle it was to gaze upon, for there I beheld man grovelling along always upon one level, dull and inelastic. So ignorant and innocent he looked, and annoyingly blind to his surroundings—and yet I am identically the same myself. While above him at various heights were rank upon rank of substantial-looking spirits, with graceful, free-and-easy movements, flitting in and out among themselves but never colliding. I could not discern what they were doing, but from the appearance of the very great majority I knew that they could have but one object in view following man with such tenacity.

Minerva was the while looking out for a subject whose book of life she might read to me.

We suddenly changed our direction, and turned towards what resembled a little boy, standing looking into a shop window. The poor lad was surrounded by frivolous spirits, evidently bent upon mischief or making him throw away his money on rubbish.

“This, sir,” observed Minerva, “is a soul in its material youth and happiness. This boy knows few or no troubles as long as he can get his food. For amusement he has a large field of youthful joys before him, and he is one who indulges in them whenever the opportunity presents itself.”

Here the boy walked away and left us. We did not follow him, but directed our movements across the town in an archlike direction, and came to a stand in a room which I noticed was comfortably furnished. There was

only one person in the room, who appeared to me to be in an easy-chair leisurely reading.

"This, sir," Minerva explained, "is a woman who has no cares in life ; one who alone thinks of how to appear attractive, and suit her actions to her own personal gratification. The one ambition of her present existence is how to obtain happiness in the immediate future. She is young, and not yet has she been awakened to the fact that her life is not to be one long, continuous measure of happiness. Her innocence and ignorance are very beautiful to witness and think about ; but when the time arrives for the real troubles of her life to begin, then she will probably change all her present ideas, and instinctively seek the protection of the Great Father. She has not as yet any power of the light of faith distinguishable, but I firmly believe that the crosses of life will develop it to a small extent at any rate. She is not one who will advance fast, for her eternal properties are not capable of revealing themselves rapidly."

The girl before us was deeply occupied over a book. For some time she never moved except to change her position to a more comfortable one. At length she got up suddenly and went towards what I took to be the window, and then returned and resumed her occupation.

We were watching her all this time, and it is probably a good thing for her peace of mind that she did not see us. Other persons then came hastily into our immediate presence, and forthwith there was a great commotion of spirits and human beings, three or four spirits I should say being in attendance upon each person, but I could not make an accurate count because of the general excitement.

We then left that scene and passed into the city again. In our progress we accidentally glided into a large room where many people were congregated together, and a great many spirits in close attendance upon them. We eventually stopped near three men sitting at a little table, at least that is the impression I formed of the

sight. They were talking to each other with considerable animation, and were being closely watched by numerous spirits behind them ; further, I noticed that among the great assemblage of souls in this room very few bright spirits indeed were to be seen in attendance. The premises we were then in may have been a place of public resort, an hotel, or a gambling saloon, but I made no effort to find out.

These three men who had attracted our attention were deeply absorbed in their conversation. One of them I noticed particularly was a man of considerable personal influence. I could distinguish what appeared to me like a very long moustache upon his face, but otherwise it was devoid of hair. His countenance indicated that his life was one long struggle for existence, and that in his efforts to live he scrupled not at having recourse to any sharp practice or underhand dealing. I saw this man very clearly, and was even able to read his character, whilst, strange to say, I could not glean any impressions at all of his two companions.

Minerva now said that she would explain the characteristics of the three men in front of us, beginning with the man who had attracted my attention so much :—

“ Sir, you are able to detect for yourself that this man is considerably tossed about in the ups and downs of life, trusting to his luck and cunning ; but his eternal properties are really to blame for it, because they almost compel him to lead this sort of life. He never tires of seeking amusement, and does not scruple about being led astray by evil spirits ; in fact, he cultivates the evil power so as to bring about personal gratification. He will not work as an honest man should do, but endeavours to gain his livelihood in the easiest way possible, by means of the craftiness and duplicity which he has educated. He does not intend any harm to those whom he plunders—his instinctive powers are but manifesting themselves as what they really are. In this instance he has no intention of deceiving his two friends ; he is

now giving them business advice of a nature which cannot be called honourable, and not at all in keeping with the methods which our first acquaintance in this locality would adopt. He is sincere in his advice, but fails to entertain any feeling of justice towards those with whom the business is to be transacted. He is not a true specimen of the average business man of the world, for if such were the case then human progress would not have been anything like what it is now, for true advancement only comes through channels which have ever been opposed to such practices as this man has recourse to ; they are superior and elevating, whereas such as are here advocated act as a drag to progress."

Minerva then fixed her attention upon the second man, and thus resumed :—

" This man, sir, is of a different stamp in every respect from the last one. He is a person who has no thought whatever about religion. He stops short at the very mention of it, and shuns it as much as he can. He is instinctively afraid of religion, and hesitates as long as possible about showing his true feelings upon it. It is very uncertain whether he ever will be able to exercise faith ; indeed, he is one of whom I regard it as very doubtful whether he was ever a true follower of the Master in the past eternity. He is a good business man, ever utilising his energy to attain a position from which he hopes to retire and live a life of happiness.

" The third man, sir, is one who is also interested in business. He endeavours to think about religion and connect the two, and in this respect he is greatly agitated mentally. Even now, as he is sitting here, he is struggling with his conscience as his friend lays before him a plan of making money regardless of its honesty. He does not know which way to turn. Money temptations are strong, but the power of Conscience is ever gently but firmly forcing itself to the front. He is in great perplexity, and does not seem to be able to decide upon which course to adopt ;—but, sir, such is God's will, ever

separating His true followers from His opponents ! This is life upon earth viewed from a spiritual aspect. Man is quite incapable of accurately reading all his neighbour's thoughts, hence he is incompetent to pass judgment upon any of his fellow creatures. Such are the laws of Omnipotence, and the three souls near us are but typical men of the world—many are better, many much worse ! ”

These three men ceased their conversation and soon departed. It was my wish to know the name of this town, and I requested Minerva, if possible, to find out where we were from the minds of our subjects. She consented to do this just as the harmony was broken and they were about to leave.*

We did not follow them, but went further afield amongst this congestion of souls, man and spirit ; however, we did not find any sufficiently quiet to read their thoughts, although I have not the slightest doubt but that Minerva in her great power could have done so in any case, for at present her one desire is my edification.

We left this particular place, and were again on the move when Minerva said, “ Come ! let us visit another of these cities of men ; I will lead you.” Instantly we were away, and almost as quickly were we descending again somewhere within the confines of a city.

I cannot form any estimate of the distance we travelled between these two places, but however far it was in miles it certainly did not take us long to cover the distance.

Again we dived into the midst of human life, but where we then were the combination of souls, upon earth and in the spiritworld, did not seem nearly so great. Man after his own determined fashion was struggling tenaciously along the ground, precisely the same as at the last place we visited. He looked uncommonly satisfied with himself despite his adhesion to earth, followed by a

* On February 7, 1906, Minerva, at my request, made a special visit to this town in order to obtain for me its name, and about a quarter of an hour afterwards she gave me the word “ Melbourne.”—W. T. W.

motley crowd of spirits, but with movements so opposite to his own as forcibly to attract my attention.

We noiselessly and invisibly flitted about, hither and thither, until at last Minerva's attention was centred upon a solitary individual, whom, when I examined her, I found to be an old woman. She was reading, or rather had been reading, and was now sitting with the open book upon her lap, no doubt thinking. There was no other human being in her presence, but only a few spirits hovering about.

"Sir," Minerva said in a thoughtful mood, "this is a soul in the material form of an old woman, who is waiting for death to awaken again to a condition of true life. Perhaps this old woman herself does not care to think that she is actually waiting for death, but such is the case. The instinct of human nature is to dread death. It is a law ordained by Omnipotence to regulate the disposition of the bodily properties ; it originated in and is confined to the material body. The soul not infrequently longs to be free again, but this instinctive power of the human body is too strong to allow any such wish to take effect. No man breathes but who possesses some inherent fear of death, especially during his prime, when he is in the midst of the test. The woman you see here, sir, is waiting for yet dreading its approach. She yearns for it to be over, for she knows that she is nothing but a burden to those around her. All her interests in life are ebbing away, and she thinks only of her inevitable end. She is not ill, but she is aged and worn out ; and it will be a great blessing to her when the Angel of Death comes down bringing the order for her release from bondage. As I have just said, she has a fear of death ; the hidden secrets beyond are as yet uncertainties in her mind. She possesses faith, and realises through faith the existence of an Omnipotent Power. Her ideas about God are very limited and very ignorant, but she firmly believes what she is taught, for her intelligence is too circumscribed to allow her to go beyond what she is told to

believe. She is contented in such belief, and fully expects that after death a very long time will elapse before she is again endowed with existence, and this future existence, she is informed, will be one of a material nature, although it is called an eternal one. I can only say that a very pleasant surprise indeed awaits her when she is released from her material body and awakens to spiritual freedom, there to see old friends and angels waiting to minister to her. Further, her surprise will not end here either, for when she is conducted to her sphere, and there beholds and partakes of its glory, her joy will be unbounded ; and as she advances and her knowledge increases she will appreciate the love and beauty of real life ; then, when she looks back to the past, her existence upon earth, her ignorance, her helplessness, and her trials, she will forget them all, for they are bodily troubles and die with the body, only an indistinct recollection of them being left which advanced knowledge soon obliterates for an all-wise reason. But, sir, let us be moving, for this soul we cannot help."

We glided away, and as we journeyed I requested Minerva to obtain the name of this particular town for my own satisfaction. Forthwith, we stopped close beside a man who seemed to be engaged upon the street doing something, but what I could not tell.

Then in a moment Minerva said : " Adelaide is the name of this place ! "

At once I knew where we were, but previously I had been quite in the dark. Minerva gave me this name without the least trouble or exertion in procuring it ; in fact, just as if she had known it all along, instead of having to read it from the mind of the man in front of us.

We then resumed our journey, but it was not long before my attention was arrested upon a group of men who were literally surrounded by evil spirits. The tumult and excitement both of men and spirits were great. It was a sight not to be easily forgotten, but I could not

make out anything beyond that it looked like a street fight. However, we did not stay there long, but pressed forward, for now I was beginning to feel prominent indications that my faculties were forsaking me, and that my body's attractive power was rapidly gaining the upper hand. I tried as best I could to overcome this feeling, and we continued our wanderings a short time longer, but without any satisfaction to myself.

At last I was compelled to inform Minerva that I was now of no more use in the spiritworld and must positively return to my body. She no doubt was already acquainted with this fact, nevertheless she did not at once respond to my request.

"Sir," she began, "man you have now seen in his mortal confinement. He does not realise how great his restrictions really are, for his temporary intelligence knows of nothing superior to his present material surroundings. Some men have great difficulties and trials to contend against, while others have but few; some are born in luxury, others in abject poverty; some are so gifted that they can make merry, others are morose and gloomy; some are intelligent, others ignorant; some work to attain definite results, others think only of the present; some are good, others evil; some religious, others indifferent; indeed, the various dispositions and conditions seen amongst mankind are innumerable, still, all are equal in God's eyes, and all have an equal chance of developing faith sooner or later. From this unwieldly *mélange* of human souls slowly the faithful are advancing towards the Master; the others, incapable or undesirous, drop off at every point of the long, straight road that leads to Heaven, but each so ultimately attains its permanent position, which corresponds with its own previous eternal position and desires. Such is the great purpose of God. Man starts at the very beginning of the process, the passing through is but of short duration, but it is the coming out which should be the great consideration. No man nor spirit can fathom

the unfathomable power of God, nor yet can either of them appreciate Him as He is! Now, sir, we had better return to your body, for it is rapidly becoming exhausted."

We must have spent a considerable amount of time upon this very interesting expedition, for the distance traversed from my body had not been, comparatively speaking, great, yet I felt the latter extremely prostrate and urgently calling me back.

On our return journey we did not travel rapidly at first, but went through this city amidst its conglomeration of men and spirits, and exhausted as I was, yet I could not fail to be impressed by the strange and anomalous sight before me.

Man! how different he looked, yet how impossible to define exactly where the difference lay. His solid material self had in a great measure disappeared, and other spiritual properties were visible which made him look less substantial than the spirits which were about him. He had lost all his imposing grandness, and from this approach he was replaced by an existence whose appearance was neither pleasant nor dignified to behold. The spirit beside him had taken his place, and had become the superior, quite-at-my-ease, and graceful being which man is proud to consider himself. The difference is pronounced to the last degree, and it is better for him that he will never behold the sight until he has passed beyond for good, for were he suddenly allowed to see himself from behind, from a higher and spiritual standpoint, he would be more than disappointed at the sight.

We returned to my body. The homeward journey was rapid indeed, for this system of locomotion is advanced beyond the ken of man.

CHAPTER XII

WAS IT JUPITER ?

February 16.—Once again in duty bound I found myself face to face with Minerva, ready to fulfil to the best of my ability the engagement made some months ago.

No time was wasted, for the undertaking before me would be an arduous one, and the journey far.

Minerva in her ever-the-same-sort-of-way informed me that all arrangements for the visit had been made, and that we would return to my body without delay and start from it, as such a procedure would somewhat relieve those of my brain properties which would be so severely called into operation during the forthcoming examination.

“Sir,” she went on, “you shall interview that spirit who kindly was of service to us upon a previous occasion, and it will be your duty to obtain whatever information you are able. You shall interrogate her yourself, but it will be necessary to requisition the services of Marian as interpreter. The spirit whom you are about to question is already apprised of your coming, for I have made all preparations. We shall repair to the region in the vicinity of the world from which she hails, but far enough away from its surface to be free from molestation by the masses of evil spirits who are congregated in the nearer localities. And now, sir, let us hence and prepare for the journey, for the exhaustion entailed upon you will be great before our return.”

We had simply to arrange ourselves in proper order, due care being taken of myself, the only vulnerable member of the party. Minerva assumed the lead ;

Marian, myself, and Louisa in a row behind her, and the stranger following as rear-guard.

I must say that I did not relish the idea of going this immense distance from my body, but I suppressed all rising thoughts of what it would be like on my return, and so we started. The pace at which we travelled must have been beyond human computation, and as we left matter and space behind at an unconscionable rate I could feel that I was an enormous distance from my body. The sensation was by no means a comfortable one, getting worse as it did all the time, until at last I seemed to be so far away from it that the connection was almost imperceptible. Still, onward we went, then suddenly came to a full stop. My journey round and about Australia had been a mere bagatelle compared with this one.

I was somewhat upset at first after this, to my now played-out powers, terrible undertaking, but slowly regained my spiritual normal.

I gazed about as my custom always is when idle. Minerva had left us, and we were by ourselves in space. There were very few spirits at all visible, and these far away and evidently not very curious, for they never came towards us.

I confess that it was with considerable satisfaction to myself that so few spirits were noticeable around us, for upon my previous visits to this world my attention had been entirely monopolised in investigating them to the best of my ability, and now I wanted no more of their company. My sole object on this occasion was to question a bright, powerful spirit, and I knew that with my limited power and depleted brain it would take all my strength and energy to discharge this duty properly, without being handicapped by the presence and influence of evil spirits. Minerva, in her great discretion, also had reasons, for no doubt she had purposely brought me to this charming spot, where pure and invigorating space alone was visible in whichever direction I looked.

Presently Marian, who was at my left side, aroused me from my reverie to behold Minerva and my subject in the distance. However, they did not long remain thus, for almost instantly they were right in front of us.

The new-comer at once occupied a particular position facing me, about the usual distance away. Marian then assumed her regular station as interpreter. Minerva was at my left, some little distance off. Louisa took up her habitual place upon my right, and the stranger was behind me.

I looked at the spirit opposing me just as any one in my position would do, but I could not detect in her appearance any signs by which I could positively say that she had not come from the earth. Her figure, her manners, her mode of expressing herself, as well as other characteristic features which spirits possess, but which I am quite unable to particularise, although they appear in all spiritual actions and works, were the same.

Our greetings performed, I began to interrogate this spirit. At the outset she informed me that she would, with pleasure, answer my questions to the best of her ability, but that she was sorry she was not now well versed in the conditions and affairs which maintained upon the world at present in close proximity to us, and upon which she had undergone her material subjection. Further, that since her arrival in the spiritworld, she had given no attention to worldly matters, but nevertheless she still had a recollection of the general circumstances prevalent in the locality where she had resided, and that her superior knowledge of certain spiritual works would greatly assist her.

I then began to interrogate her :—

“ I suppose you do not know how long you have been in the spiritworld ? ”

The answer I received through Marian reminded me that time in this region and time as I was accustomed to it were probably different quantities, but no figures were given.

"Can you tell me what your mission is ? "

"Yes, certainly ; but you will be no wiser. It is with spirits, and in connection with the region about this world."

From this answer I inferred that it was in connection with supernatural affairs, and had no relation to man.

"I suppose it keeps you constantly occupied—busy and happy ? "

"Yes, sir ; I am always engaged, and am very happy."

"Have you ever visited any other world than this one ? "

"No, sir, none ; but I do visit my home at times—the Fourth Sphere."

"I suppose it is because you have no desire to do so ? "

"Certainly, I have no desire, nor yet have I authority to do so."

"Then do you ever visit the actual surface of this world, the one upon which you were subjected ? "

"Yes. Sometimes I do pass close to it, and occasionally I stop to look at it, but there is neither pleasure nor satisfaction in doing so."

"Can you give me any reason for this ? "

"No, sir, beyond that my work does not require me to visit it, hence I have no interest there."

"Now, can you give me any general information about the inhabitants of this world at the time you left it ? "

"I can tell you what I know upon the subject."

"Were there many inhabitants upon it ? "

"Yes, immense numbers ! "

"Can you give me a rough estimate of the number ? "

To this question no recognisable answer was given.

"Has it ever been calculated what the numbers are ? "

"Sir, you do not understand. Material man cannot possibly estimate the size of this world. It is so very large, and there is another reason which prevents him from knowing what it is like as a whole."

"Indeed ! Then is no one able to travel all round it ? "

"No, sir ; it is impossible to do such a thing."

"What prevents it from being done ? "

"There is a great obstruction which none can overcome, hence man is confined to certain localities."

"Do I understand from this that he cannot travel much about ? "

"Well, there are certain times when he can go further than at others."

"Can you tell me what this obstruction is ? "

"It consists of a barrier which always has been there ; and it is considered that without the presence of this barrier this world would be uninhabitable."

"What is the nature of this barrier ? "

"I cannot explain further than that it is naturally there overhead, and that man can only live below the level of it, for it means death to attempt to penetrate far into it."

"Explain further, please ? "

"Well, the country is very mountainous, and over man's head is balanced a huge, dense substance called the Wēāy. At certain times this substance is higher than at others. The presence of the Wēāy shuts the inhabitants in to certain districts."

"I suppose, then, it covers the tops of the mountains ? "

"That is exactly the case. Any one can climb these mountains until he comes to the level of the Wēāy, then he must stop."

"Can he not penetrate through this Wēāy ? "

"No, certainly not ! "

"Can you tell me of what this Wēāy is composed ? Is it of substance natural or foreign to the world man dwells upon ? "

"I cannot answer you for certain, and when I left that world I do not think any one in the locality where I dwelt knew what its exact nature was."

"Can you tell me why it is there ? "

"It was placed there, so I have always understood, to make this world inhabitable."

“ Does it increase or decrease in density ? ”

“ That I know not.”

“ How does this world receive its light ? ”

“ From outside sources, but it is not known whence it originates, although it seems to come from the Wēāy.”

“ Is the light continuously the same ? ”

“ No, sir ; it varies in degree at different times.”

“ Is the climate a changeable one from hot to cold, or does the temperature remain about the same at all times ? ”

“ It changes greatly according to the brightness of the light.”

“ Now, I must inform you that man upon our world is ever curious, and is always anxious to know more, so I wish you to tell me the name of the world you come from.”

“ I expected such a question, and have come prepared with the answer, although I fail to see what benefit it will do you. The name by which the inhabitants of our locality knew it was Zyxon.”

“ Can you see other worlds from it ? ”

“ No, not as far as I am aware, although in olden times many claim to have seen wondrous sights beyond the Wēāy, but their tales were doubted. However, I now know that there were sights to be seen.”

“ What is the general occupation of the inhabitants ? ”

“ They manufacture numerous things, and devote great attention to bettering the products of the soil by cultivating it and making various artificial erections to improve the growth of their crops.”

“ Are they a busy people ? ”

“ Yes, they are always occupied, both in the country and in the cities.”

“ Are there any animals upon this world ? ”

“ Yes, sir, many different kinds.”

“ Are any of them used for food ? ”

“ Yes ; those used for food are taken great care of in every respect.”

“Are any of them employed as beasts of burden?”

“Yes. For this purpose there are animals of great strength and durability. There are also various kinds of wild animals, which roam about over different parts of the country that man does not inhabit, but always below the level of the Wēāy.”

“Is all the work done manually, or by the assistance of animals, or have the people any artificial means of getting it done for them?”

“They have great and powerful machines to help them, but I was not well versed upon this subject.”

“Do you remember how these machines were worked—the nature of the power employed?”

“Yes, it was obtained from the Wēāy.”

“How?”

From the answer I received it appeared that great contrivances like elevators, provided with large cups, were erected up the mountain sides, penetrating into the Wēāy. These cups, when inverted, naturally filled themselves with Wēāy substance, which, being lighter than the air, was brought down to the level in this simple way. The supply thus obtained was then stored in one of several enormous tanks, and kept there until required for consumption. When this was about to take place some other substance was first injected into the particular tank required, and the chemical or mechanical mixture of the two substances resulted in the generation of great power. When one tank was emptied the next one in turn was acted upon, and so on, ever continually keeping up a supply of power. This power was then utilised in working the machinery.

“Were there many machines of this kind in general use?”

“Yes; to my knowledge they were universally employed.”

Thus far had the examination of this spirit been conducted by question and answer, but, as I have had occasion to mention previously, such is by no means the

best way of obtaining information in the spiritworld. Of this I was now fully convinced ; besides, it was necessary to make as much haste as possible in the limited time at my disposal, so I requested my informant to give me a brief account of man's progress upon that world. This method proved a much more satisfactory one, for no time was wasted.

She consented, and commenced :—

“ I am not now well acquainted with the history of my people, but still I remember a few facts. There is on record an account of the first existence of man upon this world, but it is so enshrouded in mystery and mixed up with old-world ideas that no reasonable person of my time believed it ; however, as you wish me I shall tell it in brief. Far back in the past a great disturbance took place upon some remote world, and as a result thereof the Great Power, in a mysterious way, caused the world Zyxon to be made. This Great Power, being wroth with certain of those souls who had taken part in this disturbance, banished them to this newly created world, and in order to prevent their escape enclosed it in the Wēāy. These prisoners forthwith gave vent to their feelings of annoyance, and endeavoured to leave it, but this they found impossible. They then by some means forced the mountains to spring up from the level of the surrounding country, by such recourse expecting to be able to escape through the Wēāy, but even this device proved a failure. How the fable ends the annals do not clearly reveal, but of course the whole story is merely a primitive explanation of an obscure point.

“ The inhabitants of this world are not promiscuously dispersed over the whole country, but live in communities in different localities. Each community is self-governing, having a ruling authority of its own ; and at no time has any one community been tolerant of outside sway. In the district from which I came the people dwelt in contentment. They, of course, had their troubles to struggle against as well as their duties to perform, but

they were satisfied to abide by their own government, and were always at peace with their neighbours.

“The inhabitants of this world have ever been fond of fighting, one community or another being generally at war with the adjoining one—not, however, out of malice or hatred, but because his possessions were coveted. Some countries were always at war, for one reason or another, with the result that they were usually in a chronic state of famine, for the land was neglected and provisions had to be imported from afar, which could only be effected at great cost.

“Man has his religion, and it is the same belief wherever he is found. He is fully satisfied that there is a future existence, and, as a rule, he endeavours to lead a life which will entitle him to a high position in the next world. This constitutes the main feature of the religious profession generally in vogue, but numerous doctrines are superadded which it is impossible for me now to explain.

“How this religion originated is but very indefinitely known at the present day, and as time has almost obliterated the original facts, so the ambiguity attached to them is becoming increasingly greater. Tradition narrates that the Great Power Himself actually descended upon this world and acquainted all with the existence after death, and explained to them the terms upon which they could alone gain entrance to the future world of happiness. They were required to deny themselves and give to those who were in want; they must love and forgive their neighbours, and educate their children in a proper way, so that they might, on reaching maturity, give some thought to this future world of bliss. The better these several professions were acted up to, so much the greater would the reward be. In latter days it has become almost instinctive knowledge with man that he will live again, but he knows nothing definite upon the subject. When he believes then he manifests his faith, but when he is devoid of faith then he devotes no thought to religion. This was the one subject upon which much

anxiety and attention were being bestowed when I left my material body behind upon Zyxon, but I am not acquainted with the exact advance which increased intelligence has now made, therefore I cannot explain what the present position of religious attainment on this world accurately is. Individually I exercised faith, although I was then ignorant of many things relating to religion, as well as of the worldly troubles which its profession brings upon man, for these I have learned since my arrival in the spiritworld."

"Then you do not exactly know what the general belief at the present day is?"

"Nothing beyond what I have just mentioned, for you must understand that religion is not openly tolerated by the bulk of mankind. By this I mean that people do not like to hear religion conversed about in their presence; it is reserved for private meditation, and is greatly cherished by the truly faithful soul. I was not entitled to know more upon it than I was taught by my parents, for my material career was cut short before I had reached the age when religion is secretly and carefully revealed in full."

"Then there are no public meetings where one can listen to religious exposition?"

"Not public; but privately whole families pray at certain times, or prayer is offered up individually in secret. It is considered an offence against one's neighbour to converse openly about religion. Even among the faithful themselves it is studiously avoided, for to do such a thing is recognised as a boastful act, and if one were even to allude to such a topic in the presence of an unbeliever then a personal and family insult would have been committed. There were certain men who abandoned the world with its sinful pleasures and devoted themselves to meditation and holy living. They dwelt by themselves in buildings especially erected for that purpose, into which none others were ever allowed even to enter, for they were professors well versed in the word

of God, and were looked up to with reverence by the rest of the people. The particular duty required of them was to explain to all at a certain age, explicitly and completely, the various tenets of the religion. The interview was of a solemn and serious nature, and one never forgotten by the subject. Each pupil was given a copy of the records, and if in the future any one required help or further explanation he had but to return to these authorities with his treasured record and they would enlighten him. It was a strict law that every person at a certain age must go through this ceremony under penalties of the severest nature. Those who were faithful and believed what was taught them, after death, advanced upwards. This I am now doing, and I ever rejoice when I think of the great happiness which awaits me at the end of my journey."

"Those nations who are constantly at war—what do they do about religion ? "

"When nations are at war among themselves no sign of religion is then evident in their midst, and the learned recluses are compelled to retire to countries at peace."

I also was informed by this spirit that the people lived in cities and towns, similarly as upon the earth, but perhaps they were not so large, for each district seemed to be self-governing and to provide for its own demands. In certain seasons there was interchange of various goods between the different communities, for they evidently did not employ money as a concentrated equivalent, but bartered their wares.

From the superficial account given me of the general conduct of the inhabitants I was led to infer that they made no pretence at mental culture, for, indeed, there does not seem to have been any wide field for study. To travel far away from one's home was an impossibility, hence they were debarred from investigating the world they dwelt upon ; the Wēāy prevented them from seeing the firmament, and the marvels there to be examined and considered ; religion was so regarded that it

constituted an offence against public morals to refer to it ; there was no incentive to promote inventions for a permanent power was always near at hand ; it is doubtful if they employed money, hence there was no very great inducement to explore in search of it or to scheme how to obtain it, and there was but little if any news from the outside world, hence their field for inquiry and material progress was of the most limited kind. But of course other parts of this world may not be so hemmed in, consequently the progress in such districts may be more pronounced.

They do not seem to have possessed any quicker means of transportation than that provided by animals, and the country was altogether too mountainous to warrant any severe undertaking of climbing, especially when the Wēāy so curtailed the view.

I was now rapidly becoming exhausted—indeed, so much so that Marian had to finish the interview on my behalf. At last the tension became so extreme and unbearable that it was a perfect torture for me to remain any longer, but I held on until Minerva was compelled to terminate the meeting hurriedly, and we were instantly back to my body, where the relief to be into it again was beyond expression.

This certainly was the most complete collapse of my power that I had ever experienced. I had been interested in the communication and had fought against the ever more pronounced inevitable, but the climax came at last, and I fell to pieces so irrecoverably that it took me some time to rally even after I did return into my body, but a good sound sleep refreshed me wonderfully.

Now what world, from a human standpoint, was this one likely to be ? I think it more than probable, for several reasons, that it was one of the planets of our solar system ; and I have headed this chapter with the name of the planet which very possibly it was.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LATE REV. DR. JOSEPH PARKER'S TESTIMONY

February 18, 1903.—The remarkable and interesting interview recorded in this chapter was held with the spirit of the late Rev. Dr. Joseph Parker, of the City Temple, London.

This interview had been arranged by Minerva in December last. It has an important bearing upon this revelation, and, as will be seen later on, it had actually been foreordained as far back, at any rate, as the early months of the year 1900.

This meeting did not take place in the spiritworld when I was in my spirit form, but when in my normal bodily state, as it was necessary to husband my fast ebbing powers as much as possible, in preparation for my great journey to be described in the next chapter.

Before the interview took place I did personate my spirit form for a short time, and did go into the spiritworld, there to satisfy my curiosity and assure myself that the spirit with whom I was now in communication was actually Dr. Parker. Of this fact there could be no doubt, nor was I disappointed in my inspection, for I stood face to face with one whose very presence betrayed power, new-born spirit though he was. I conversed with him for a few moments, and was strongly impressed by his remarks ; they were short, pithy, and uttered with firmness and decision. I could read from his spiritual character that he was a thoughtful, intelligent, and studious spirit. I had conversed with him upon a previous occasion shortly after his death, but had never seen his form until I beheld it now. Close beside him was

another bright spirit, brighter than that of Dr. Parker, which I was informed was the spirit of his wife, Mrs. Parker.

During our conversation he made it evident by his remarks that he had the deepest interest in the compilation of this work, and in these revelations as a whole. It was the resulting benefit to mankind that he alone considered, and he informed me that he had much to say to the world in general upon subjects about which man is completely in the dark, but that as he was not allowed a free hand in the matter his observations must necessarily be of a strictly limited nature.

We soon returned to my body, and I prepared myself for the coming interview, wishing at the same time that my faculties had been at their prime so that I might have remained in the spiritworld, and there communed with my interesting friend.

At the outset of the interview I found that Dr. Parker had not yet sufficient control over his power to convey his observations in a smooth and continuous current. His eagerness seemed too great; his method of delivering himself jerky and spasmodic, presenting almost disconnected interpretations in my brain. I could not follow his remarks well, hence was compelled to discontinue communing with him personally. His wife then acted as interpreter with very beneficial results, for now the information came in slow, flowing currents, and was easy to translate.

He began :—" Now, my friend, as I have something to say of the past I had better refer to it first, so that the reader of these works will be able to understand how it is that I happen to be here—again, as it were, in touch with the world.

" During my life upon earth I was a minister of God's Religion, and held an important position in a certain religious circle.

" My belief in the Godhead was great, and I preached to those who came to hear me my ideas of the mysteries

of religion. Now I am no longer a man but a spirit of the Third Sphere, with ever-increasing knowledge. I have obtained more information since I passed over into this world than it is possible for any man to acquire in a lifetime. I am happy, extremely happy, solving the mysteries which are in front of me on every side. Spiritual existence is superior to material existence—but upon such subjects explanations have already been made.

“My wife and I were greatly attached to each other in my advanced years, and when she was taken away from me it was like living an empty life. I used to feel her spiritual presence near me, yet was unable to explain exactly how I did feel her, but that she was there I felt certain.

“I received an unsigned letter from a reverend gentleman in America, who I now know to be your father, Dr. Wilson,* informing me very lucidly how I felt her presence, and he also explained to me certain abstruse points which I considered of a remarkable nature. The entire contents of this communication puzzled me greatly, and I frequently thought over them and very much longed to hear more. I did hear further from my anonymous friend, and what explanations I did receive interested me so much that I was anxious to inquire into the source whence this information came. Little did I then think that I was personally destined to contribute to the work which was being so unostentatiously accomplished, but under circumstances absolutely necessary for the purpose—but Omnipotence is ever working in silence !

“It is needless for me to go further into this matter, when it is explained how my original connection with Dr. Wilson was established.

“My time arrived to cross the stream and fathom the unknown for myself. When I awakened to the nature of the existence in which I found myself immediately after death a sight confronted me which astonished me

* See my father's statement at the end of this interview.

beyond measure. But one great comfort was there awaiting me—before me stood my beloved wife ; the first to welcome me into my advanced life. We soon left the earth. I was taken to my sphere, and there conducted about by my wife, who showed and explained to me marvellous new things. All my earthly interests and ideas vanished, and I set to work to instruct myself anew, with the result that I am ever-increasingly acquiring knowledge, so that now the more I learn the greater the incomprehensible power and love of God appear.

“ I thought of what I had learned from Dr. Wilson about spiritual existence, and saw clearly for myself that there was truth in it. My wife also assured me of the accuracy of his knowledge, for she had visited him upon numerous occasions, again and again asking him to write me during the dark days of distress preceding my death. I desired greatly to visit my unknown friend, so my wife conducted me to his abode. There I had explained to me many extraordinary things. I saw for myself, and was satisfied that man upon earth was going to receive further information concerning his existence of an accurate and trustworthy nature. I cannot express how interested I felt, so much so that I remained for a long time conversing personally with Dr. Wilson, and through you his son.

“ I was generally informed of the contents of the works, from the first stage of this beautiful revelation to its present almost consummated condition. When I had heard it all I was for a moment seized with my old fire and enthusiasm, and I felt a pang of regret that these works had not been published in my day. It seemed as if I had been cut off from the world on purpose, but for no other reason had I the least desire to return to life in the flesh.

“ I was introduced to Minerva, a very powerful angel, and one fully capable of discharging the important duty entrusted to her. She explained to me a great many points which satisfied me intensely. She then informed

me that she would require my services upon a certain subject at the end of her work. This pleased me much, and forthwith I devoted my attention exclusively to acquiring knowledge upon this particular subject. Since that time such has been my sole occupation in this immense world where the field for inquiry is great, for I wished to provide myself with as much information as possible. Then it was that for the first time I really beheld, in their truer and higher light, the omnipotent works of God for the soul's future existence and benefit. Now I am about to fulfil this engagement, possessed of more knowledge upon the subject to be considered than I can ever hope to explain to the world.

“Man !—both who and what he is have already been clearly defined ; but man, tracing him back through his higher properties, becomes lost in the eternity of the past. Man has no knowledge of having lived in the past eternity, but circumstances prove that most certainly he did then exist in an eternal condition. Man upon earth has but a short existence, limited in all respects, and subjected to troubles. After he is dead and buried he is seen no more, and is practically never personally heard from again,—the reason for this has also been explained. After death the soul, invested with a spiritual body, is consigned to the spiritworld, where, if it be a faithful soul, it slowly advances until it arrives at a state of perfection, when it is permitted to enter Heaven and be Glorified, and become a complete eternal soul again.

“Man and his life upon earth are but one phase in this grand process of separation, and the only requirement demanded from him in order that he may ultimately attain perfection is to exercise faith in the Godhead, and to lead a life which will entitle him to advance after death.

“There are no dogmas and theories which, if a man do not believe, will signify his exclusion from Heaven. Religion is not what man considers it to be at the present

day. It is alone to separate the eternal souls through their own instinctive powers ; not man born with body and soul created at birth, and destined before being created to be good because God has specially chosen him, nor yet are any other adopted theories correct. The facts are simple and logical when understood. They are grand and beautiful, and through each process of the entire test one can detect the perfect power and justice of God.

“ This revelation lays before man a new existence, new hope, and a greater interest in the life beyond the grave. It puts him in possession of a new study upon which, if he be thoughtfully inclined, he will never tire of meditating, for the far-reaching nature of the information granted him is beyond his computation. Man cannot grasp everything, but his common sense will carry him a long way if he chooses to exercise it. Without doubt there are mysteries, but to such a circumscribed combination as man is there always will be an impenetrable barrier through which he cannot pierce. Omnipotence has decreed that it shall be so for great and just reasons !

“ The Godhead is revealed to such an extent that man is able, in a humble way, to picture to himself the Father's grandeur. His Majesty has increased, and His Power has been explained so that it is no longer possible to think of God as a material being. The wonders which Christ performed while He lived as a man among men cannot now be regarded with doubt, and His eternal properties cannot again be confounded with material properties. Man has now no occasion to think of death with fear and trembling. All the old circumscribed ideas upon religion will soon be professions of the past, for henceforth man will be allowed to advance one step forward in his knowledge of God and of the general purpose of his own earthly existence ; and, once common sense understands what is explained, man will then no longer hesitate to acknowledge it and be guided by it.

Man is endowed with common sense for a reason, therefore it is to his benefit to use it, even though he be firmly persuaded upon what he is at present taught about religion. Actually to his soul it makes no difference, for he is exercising faith in either case, but to present-day intelligence common-sense arguments are distinctly more acceptable. Man in his material body does not see, neither does he feel—except through faith—the power of Omnipotence, which is ever operating in his midst, both while he works and when he rests, preparing such circumstances and events as he knows of frequently only by chance and considers as accidents. Man does not see the spirits around him ; he cannot behold the beauties of space ; he is limited severely ; he is also overruled strictly, but the result of this restriction upon earth is duly appreciated after death, when the soul is in a position to understand it all. Those who have been faithful upon earth will look back with great satisfaction upon the ordeal they have passed through, for they will then realise to the full how they themselves have been eternally benefited by the short subjection. Some soon forget all about it, others care not, while some are wrathful, and others even pleased to be evil. Omnipotence supervises everything. No power save Omnipotence is capable of performing the gigantic work of separating all the souls. The power that is required and that is in operation is equal to the task of subjecting the numberless souls who are upon the many worlds as well as those in the spiritworld. It is equal to ruling each individual soul and enforcing laws which cannot be broken, for God possesses power enough to see that they are obeyed.

“Man has certain histories or records of events which happened, or are supposed to have happened, in the dark ages of the past. These Biblical, or Old Testament stories, are a source of great perplexity and doubt to man when viewed from a religious standpoint. With great difficulty I have ascertained, through spiritual

means, that such were at one time man's religion ; but now the day of belief in any or all of them is gone, and in the spiritworld there is no information to be had of the exact detailed truths. Man is therefore justified when he disregards whatever was written in a religious sense antedating the birth of Christ. The primitive state of man and the ignorance which was universally manifest during that entire period must be classified as a dispensation of its own, and has no bearing whatever upon the Christian religion. God has ever conducted the supervision of man through His angels, for He never personally visits the earth. His Authority is more urgently occupied elsewhere discharging greater works than any performed upon the earth. His angels are His workers, therefore they were the powers who were seen in the pre-Christian era.

“ In this now distant period of man's existence upon earth it is an undeniable fact that he was allowed wondrous sights to impress him with the power of God. But how do they compare with the privileges granted man nowadays ? There were many remarkable and even supernatural conditions and events, calamities and triumphs, which happened to the race of people known in history as God's people, as well as to their enemies. But man at the present day—what advantages does he not possess over these people of old ? Still, for all that the twentieth-century man has no better chance of Heaven than any of his ancestors at any age, however remote.

“ Man's religion takes its date from the coming of Christ, for then he was first called upon to exercise faith, and love his neighbour. What Christ preached was essentially and emphatically correct, but the intelligence of the people was at fault, and that is the reason why man has received such contradictory and inexplicable ideas upon religion. Christ ever explained Himself in parable, for man in those days was quite unable to understand and believe in the conditions which do

actually exist. Again, only a very short and incomplete record was kept of the great acts of love performed by Christ, and of the remarkable nature of His teachings, but, with the aid of these works, what is recorded will be quite sufficient to enable him to grasp the facts as they really are. Further, many circumstances in the life of Christ are very greatly distorted by present-day interpretation.

“Man is so engrossed in material affairs that he has not been able to disassociate his thoughts sufficiently to consider spiritual existence aright; but now, by the decree of Omnipotence, he will be able to raise them above such transient and soul-restricting occupation, so that he may satisfy himself upon what was not lawful to be known in the past. Thus the human race is entering upon a fresh chapter of its existence. It is a new dispensation in which man’s intelligence will constitute its characteristic feature; but how far he will be allowed to advance, whether to the furthest limit to which his material endowments are capable of going, none but Omniscience know, for none but Omniscience can foresee what is in the future of Omnipotent workings.

“Man upon earth is a creature of many habits and desires. He sometimes visits a place of worship, then shortly afterwards he goes into some place of amusement which is infested by evil spirits, so that whatever good he may have derived is thus negated. Again, man is sometimes a rogue, sometimes a thief, sometimes he is learned, and not unfrequently he is a hypocrite; nevertheless, all mix in common, often regardless of these differences.

“Man does not see what his neighbour’s thoughts are, so his knowledge of his neighbour is strictly confined to what he can otherwise ascertain for himself. This is a subject which in the past has not been approached seriously, for none were able to make headway in it, but advanced knowledge, especially upon religion, changes the situation altogether. No longer ought any one to be

allowed to preach God's religion who does not believe, or understand, or act up to what he preaches. No man should be permitted to fill the office of special servant of God except he be capable of doing his work as it should be done, for great harm is perpetrated by those who in any respect fail to discharge their duties honestly and efficiently. A selection of really good and competent men for the ministry should be carefully made by those who are qualified for such a responsible duty, then the average intelligent man would go to a place of worship to listen, for he would feel satisfied that he was being instructed by one in every respect worthy of his office. He would no longer regard the ministry in the same light as he does now, but would look up to and respect his spiritual adviser as one practising what he preached.

“ It is the duty of every religious denomination to make a rigid investigation into the conduct of its ministers, and the example they are setting their hearers by their own actions, then it would most certainly be considered that some change was absolutely necessary. It not infrequently happens that those in authority do not see, or do not realise, or even do not care what kind of private lives their subordinates are leading, hence this is the real cause of the present deplorable state of affairs in the ministry and the disaffection in the public mind. It is the duty of every professing servant of God to perform his responsible duties earnestly and conscientiously. It is, likewise, the duty of those in authority to see that their inferiors in office perform their functions as ministers of God's religion both in word and action, for ignorance of any untoward or improper behaviour existing betrays lack of duty in such instances.

“ I was once, as I have already stated, a minister of God ; therefore, after a long life of active operation in that office, it is only natural that I should still have some interest in my past profession, and in what my fellow workers are doing. What I have learned since I came into this world has astonished me greatly, even horrified

me, for I have discovered that without a shadow of doubt there are an immense number of very great sinners among ministers of religion. Indeed, I further satisfied myself that professing servants of God of the present-day service *do not come up to the average of mankind in goodness*. The reasons for this melancholy state of affairs I also made myself acquainted with, but it is better for me not openly to criticise the faults of the ministry. To spiritual eyes such a condition as does actually exist sadly betrays man's hypocrisy in religious matters !

" I do not say that I was without faults myself when upon earth, for now I realise to the full the great mistakes I have made, and the deeds committed which it would have been infinitely better for me had I left undone. Every man naturally and inevitably has his own faults, but there is a clear line of demarcation between one who is able and willing to do his duty and one who is incompetent or neglectful. It is of no more interest to me personally what takes place upon earth, for I am now beyond being influenced by human opinions, but I am fully alive to the fact that there are other souls of men constantly coming on, and it is for the benefit of these souls that I am now speaking, as well as for the young who are at present upon the earth.

" In time there will be but *one Christian religion*, universal over the educated world. This religion will be free from dogmas and rites, and simply consist of pure and holy teaching of the Omnipotent Father :—how He, through His love to His followers, decreed to separate the souls so that in the eternity of the future all might dwell in peace ; how He determined that man should be tried upon earth under restricted conditions and natural laws, and how the power of faith slowly but unerringly distinguishes His true followers from those who were opposed to His authority or were evil. Faith in the Godhead and love towards one's neighbour—these are the distinct properties of the true servants of God, and such will be the simple creed of the future Christian.

“Surely such an All-wise King will adopt some simple and just method of separating the souls! Surely He will not necessitate man to believe in teachings extraneous to faith! nor in teachings outrageous to common sense as at present professed by some! The common sense which man possesses is a property which in the matter of religion is overruled by the eternal instincts of the soul. Thus one man argues religion one way, and another man contradicts him, viewing the same profession from another standpoint through the instincts of his soul.

“Religion to future generations will be different from what it has been in the past. Man has reached that stage of progress in which he is in great need of more light, for his knowledge is persistently on the increase, therefore professions of faith which were at one time considered possible to the less advanced intelligence of man are greatly doubted by the common sense of present-day enlightenment.

“There are many religions believed in by different peoples, who, as a general rule, are brought up to these particular religions by their parents. Some of these religions are very crude and idolatrous in form, while others inculcate doctrines which man himself has compiled upon what he considered a religious basis.

“There is one great body of religious people called Christians—believers in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. All in this immense class are exercising faith if they believe what is taught them. Christians, as professors of religion, are really the most entitled to more light upon their belief, for they are the most intelligent community of worshippers, hence are the most competent to appreciate advanced knowledge. Other communities pin their faith in doctrines which the common sense of the Christian absolutely forbids him to credit. Such communities, however, are exercising faith in what they believe, and the one who exercises faith in one direction is as much entitled to reward as the one who exercises

it in another, no matter what the religion teaches. Each soul is designedly placed in the body it occupies, and it is only because one soul is undergoing the test under more advantageous circumstances, and is gifted with greater intelligence than another, that that soul believes or exercises faith in a more advanced direction. The time must come when the soul of the man who believes implicitly in an ignorant profession of faith will be placed upon an equal footing with every other believer, and have a like opportunity of exercising faith in the right direction. This opportunity is given after death, and as the soul who believed in what he once considered correct sees and satisfies himself that his previous religion was quite erroneous, so he will abandon it, and his faith will make him search until he has again found something upon which to fix his belief. But after death all doubts upon religious matters are soon corrected by the vigilance and earnestness of the spirit to gather what information it wants ; all that upon earth was intangible and mysterious is swept away and replaced by clear, unmistakable facts.

“ There are also certain religions which, through their doctrines and severe spiritual laws, keep their followers in backwardness and ignorance. Common sense here ought to step in and let them see clearly that such religions are not doing for them what other religions are accomplishing for their followers. Heathen religions are in keeping with the intelligence of the believers in them. The minds of such believers are not capable of expanding and increasing in spiritual enlightenment without assistance from more advanced and better-informed sources, nevertheless what they do believe in betrays to the thoughtful mind the presence of instinct in the eternal soul.

“ Man is so constituted that if he be capable of exercising great faith it is bound to come to the surface in one form or another.

“ What Omnipotence has ordained for man during his

material existence is a subject upon which great investigations may be made.

“ Each soul previous to undergoing the test is selected by an angel appointed to that work. It is then brought down to the earth and bound into that particular body destined for it, previous to birth, at the proper time appointed. What has each one to be born ?—savage or Christian ? to be a member of some nomadic tribe or of an average city family ? to be born in luxury or poverty ? to be honoured or despised ? All these various chances and many more has the soul to take when it is born as man ; but whatever position it occupies in life is ordained by Omnipotence. Even the despised wandering tramp is ordained by Omnipotence to be thus, therefore the soul of man itself is not in the least to blame. This body with its limitations and particular surroundings was destined for this soul and that for the next, consequently no man is justified in considering himself eternally or temporarily superior to his neighbour, for he is incompetent to judge. Why such disparity is found amongst the human race is explained in many ways, but Omnipotence has ordained it to be so.

“ Omniscience knows all things, and rewards according to the conditions which were allowed the soul whilst under subjection. Thus the ignorant Red Indian, the zealous fetish worshipper, and the professor of Christianity are equal rivals in the race to God’s presence, and after everything is taken into consideration the best man will win.

“ No one man is in a position to despise any other man, for he does not know but what the person despised is the better of the two spiritually. Such knowledge of the true state of affairs should revolutionise the dislike and even contempt which the rich have towards their pecuniary inferiors, and which the white man entertains towards the coloured.

“ The rich man, if he be desirous of future happiness, must consider his poorer brother, simply because he is in

a position to do so, for he will be held to account for his wealth. To grind money from the poor under any circumstances is to be deprecated, but to do so in order to hoard it up in an avaricious way constitutes a great drawback to spiritual advancement, for wealth brings in its train debasing influences, perhaps imperceptible at first, but eventually often overwhelming in degree.

“Man possesses high and refined senses which good influence alone can develop, and to educate these senses he must lead a circumspect life.

“There are numbers who do not care to think about the future, their present happiness is their only consideration. Such persons are dangerous to youthful progress, and many great calamities might be prevented if the young could be impressed to avoid these dangers. But Omnipotence has arranged all things to bring about the desired results.

“Man is a free agent, but the power and vigilance of God are ever watching him, and have in store for him many things he does not expect.

“Now, my friend, I shall go no further into these matters, for enough has been said. Human common sense can fill in the interstices, for now the whole subject is so elucidated as to make such a thing very simple.

“Man will be amazed beyond measure when he is brought face to face with these unarguable facts. Hereditary beliefs, I am fully aware, are not to be easily shaken off, but concerning this matter man is his own master. There are innumerable souls upon earth who are ever anxiously seeking for some reasonable religion to believe in; they cannot satisfy themselves with the present-day teaching of Christianity; all such will find in these works information which will appease their spiritual cravings. I go further: I say that the very great majority of Christians nowadays are sincerely anxious for more light to be thrown upon their religion.

“ In this revelation all will find spiritual intelligence which will provide them with food for thought for a long time to come, for no man is able to grasp the full meaning of the contents of these works unless he makes them subjects of careful study ; and this I know, that the more they are pondered over the greater will be the satisfaction obtained.

“ I shall be very much interested in the progress which this far-reaching revelation will make amongst mankind. I shall constantly visit the earth, for I have a longing desire to see all relieved from their present anomalous position as regards religion.

“ These works favour no profession of faith in particular. All interpretations of the Christian religion have swerved from the proper channel, for all have undergone some change at the hand of man, who is incompetent, by himself, to throw light upon religion. *Information or increased knowledge upon the mysteries of eternal life must first be permitted by Omnipotence, and then it must originate from a source superior to any which man possesses, and that source can only be a spiritual one.*”

The above was given me in two communications. Further, I must state that this spirit not only conveyed to me the foregoing important information, but he personally supervised the recording of it ; by this I mean that he was present beside me while I wrote down his statements previously communicated, and again impressed upon me through Minerva, and now that they are down in black and white he is perfectly satisfied with the way in which the work has been done.

It now behoves me, William Teasdale Wilson, to give my version of the way in which Dr. Parker became acquainted with me to the extent to which he was.

Of course I had frequently heard about Dr. Parker, and the distinguished position he occupied in a certain Free Church community, but never had I seen him or read any of his discourses, so that previous to the part

I played in the subjoined narration my acquaintance with Dr. Parker was essentially of a hearsay nature.

On or about March 10, 1900, snowed up as we were in our lonely home upon the Rocky Mountains, thirteen miles away from the nearest post office, and about thirty-three miles distant from the village of Soda Springs, we received our budget of mail, chiefly, of course, from England. Included amongst it was *The Sunday Strand*, which in due time I naturally looked over.

My attention was drawn to an article it contained relative to Dr. Parker, and his assertion that he felt convinced his lately deceased wife was frequently near him and made efforts to commune. This heading made me smile that smile of intensely gratified satisfaction which can only come to one in my position. It made me eagerly and carefully read over the various criticisms relative to such a bold declaration, and the further I read the more amused I became at the happy ignorance—complete ignorance of the reality—contained in these ambiguous explanations.

How I regret that I did not keep that *Sunday Strand* so that I might now have the advantage of reading this particular article previous to penning these lines! If my memory does not misgive me, it recorded the various opinions of several different persons who have taken a deep interest in the occult, and who are supposed to be well acquainted with its mysteries, as well as one or more candid assertions that Dr. Parker, poor man, was suffering from hallucination—his late great bereavement had caused slight mental aberration, you know, therefore every allowance ought to be made for his recent statements upon such a subject!

It is not an uncommon practice among certain types of learned and scientific men to couch their language in terms which may reasonably be called complex. Possibly they consider that it is only in keeping with the abstruse nature of their attainments that others, less accomplished than themselves, should, not without

difficulty, be able to decipher their meaning, forgetful of what should really obtain under the circumstances, and that the greater the knowledge so much the greater should the simplicity be, even if only for the sake of man's fellow creatures. Further, it is noticeable that whenever the attempt is made to elucidate abstruse phenomena about which very little is actually known, but concerning which vague and unsubstantial opinions have been formed, then the ambiguity of the language employed becomes increasingly more complex. So it was in the present instance if I remember aright.

I laid down the magazine and thought to myself—here, indeed, is a significant sign of the times! Here is a powerfully magnetic man, physically and mentally capable of holding his own with any mortal, suddenly awakened to an advanced recognition of the existence of the unseen! Here is an honest and fearless servant of God giving utterance to an opinion which he very well knew would expose him almost to ridicule in the estimation of the bulk of material-bound minds! Here is a person in authority unhesitatingly giving expression to that which I know so well to be correct, and for the sake of which I have been compelled to abandon a happy home and a prosperous career in my native land; for the sake of which I have undergone, and still am undergoing, such a test of faith as is well-nigh beyond the appreciation of any man upon earth.

What was my duty under the circumstances? Could I in honesty sit here prosecuting my studies in quietude and allow this grand old man, in his latter days awakened to the truth, to abandon the privileged position he was allowed to occupy? When commiseration, when ridicule, when cajolery, and when ignorance were at work, which has ever been the case under similar circumstances, it was clearly my duty to step into the breach, and, if possible, strengthen this solitary hero in his solitary position; this religiously noble man in his exalted religious attainment.

I sat down in great glee, and wrote a long and explanatory letter to this my unknown friend, describing to him in terms as simple as possible the true circumstances of the case. No deterring influence was now behind me, making the act of writing in this instance a laborious and exhausting employment, which has been the case continually throughout these long years of struggle against educated and offended evil. I wrote him from a full heart, and branched out into a rough explanation of the bare outlines of the spiritual existence. I was quite satisfied that his higher mental properties had been developed for a purpose, so I felt justified in the course I was taking. I longed to interview him and personally explain everything, although at that time very ignorant upon the question generally to what I am now.

This letter, I think, ended with a request to Dr. Parker to send his wife to me, and I would interview her, and then write him clearly of the true state of affairs, for at that time his power was not maturely developed, nor yet did he know how to develop it. I suggested to him that the next time he felt his wife's presence near him he should take hold of my letter and ask her to follow it, for the letter would act as a magnetic power of connection between us—through sympathy.

According to my diary this letter was written upon Sunday, March 11, 1900. It was posted on Monday, March 19, 1900, at the post office, Henry, Idaho.

I knew very well what would be the result of my communication to Dr. Parker, and made preparations accordingly.

A certain member of my family at that time was frequently visited by a Fifth Sphere angel, and I requested this angel to do me the favour of acting as interpreter when Mrs. Parker came, and writing down her replies so that there might be no mistake in the reporting of them.

On the afternoon of Sunday, April 1, we were all assembled together in our little sitting-room, reading

and talking. Suddenly I felt a form in front of me, and a clear mental voice said, "Well, sir, I am here! What do you want with me?"

I knew at once who it was, and without hesitation turned to this member of my family and remarked: "Mrs. Parker is here—do you feel her?" The reply I received was "No." It then struck me that I had not given the spirit of Mrs. Parker the power of connection with this member of my family. This I now did, mentally of course, and immediately I was answered by a nod in the affirmative from my child.

So far so good; still, it was necessary to learn what Mrs. Parker had to say, but I did not wish the communication to be entirely a mental one between our two selves. Paper and pencil were quickly provided, and without delay the interview began. Numerous questions were asked and answered. But it is needless to enter into detail concerning the conversation, save to observe that Mrs. Parker's astonishment was intense to find that I could commune with her so clearly; indeed, her surprise to see a family so advanced in matters about which none others knew anything definite was great.

She was intimately acquainted with the contents of my letter to her husband, and said that I had given an accurate definition of the true relationship in which she and he stood. She was very grateful to me, and expressed a desire to visit me frequently if I would allow her, at the same time requesting me to write further to her husband. Altogether, the interview was a most charming one.

Minerva then came upon the scene, and visited Dr. Parker at my request. Her report was quite confirmatory of what I knew concerning him. She did not advise me to write him again, because she said the time had not then arrived for the world to be awakened to the knowledge of spiritual existence as it really is, and that any information I might send Dr. Parker must necessarily be of a fragmentary and incomplete nature.

On April 18 there is an entry in my diary of an interview with Mrs. Parker. I cannot remember what transpired at that interview, but I think she said that Dr. Parker was anxiously waiting to hear from me.

I had promised to write Dr. Parker the result of my interview with his wife, and was under the impression that I had forthwith done so, but evidently the remarks of Minerva must have deterred me from such a course, for I find an entry in my diary on Sunday, June 3, "wrote Dr. Parker."

To my certain knowledge I only sent him two letters. This second communication contained an account of my interview with his late wife, as well as a further explanation of spiritual and eternal affairs.

Mrs. Parker in her spirit form now frequently visited me, and took great interest in our work. When first she came she was in the Third Sphere, and had not begun her atonement, but at this time she had been given a mission and was in the Fourth Sphere—bright and happy.

In the course of conversation she told me that her husband had read my letters to several of his friends, who for various reasons were sceptical of their contents. She also stated that she saw that her husband in the future would be of service to me in the furthering of this work.

This information I received with much satisfaction, for I naturally interpreted it in a material sense, and built up my hopes how encouraging it would be when I went to London to have one—only one—friend to whom I could disburden my mind. Not every one can realise what a terrible position it is to be friendless, and what is worse, to be considered almost a madman by one's late friends—one and all—when one has been accustomed to pride oneself upon one's hard common sense ; and when one knows, yet cannot explain, that everything one has experienced and been made acquainted with is the very backbone of common sense.

My instructors now tightened the strings of my privileges, and shut all doors of communication with any spirits who were not engaged in this work. Mrs. Parker frequently came, and I could feel her presence near me, but was totally unable to converse with her. The reasons for such a procedure were all necessary ones, the intention being to ease the pressure upon my nervous system and prevent brain exhaustion.

On January 7, 1901, I felt Mrs. Parker's presence near me very strongly indeed, and with Minerva's consent I did hold a short conversation with her, the gist of her remarks being to request me urgently to write her husband again.

I disobeyed all instructions in this respect, and wrote Dr. Parker another long letter which I have here now lying before me.

Man is but the merest puppet in the hands of spiritual powers—and this he will very soon know as well as I do now. I wrote this letter against advice. I was a free agent and could do as I wished in the matter, regardless of internal promptings. It had been considered best by Minerva, who controls this mission, that it was not yet advisable to communicate to the world any account of the nature of the work now being accomplished. But how could I content myself to remain here and avoid chafing against such restrictions? I regularly perused the weekly edition of the *Times*, as well as other English and American newspapers, and when I read in them numerous instances of man's vain efforts and urgent solicitude after further spiritual light—which he could not possibly obtain situated as he then was—it was more than could be expected of flesh and blood not to wish to impart to others some of the soul-satisfying information I was in possession of. Letters into the dozens have I written to all quarters, to leaders of various religious thought, but in every instance, save two, the effort expended upon the communication exhausted the desire to impart knowledge, hence I never despatched

any of these epistles. I was thus conquered in spite of my determination ; and of this I am sure, that the letters written to these two different persons were designedly allowed and prompted. One of these persons was the late Dr. Parker, and has resulted in his writing from behind the scene ; the other was to a gentleman in the north of England, who has treated it with silent contempt, and doubtless shown it around to our mutual friends as evidence of my mental aberration, but in this instance also I feel satisfied that the day will come when its purpose will be apparent.

I shall now give a few extracts from my letter to Dr. Parker, dated January 7, 1901, to show the general nature of my communications.

“ It is now some months since I last wrote you. I do not doubt for a moment but that my communications have occasioned you considerable thought. Nay, I go further and state that I know perfectly well what your thoughts are upon the topics dwelt upon in my letters to you.

“ I received instructions not to write you again explanatory of mysteries either of the soul or of eternity, for it was not fair, either to yourself or to the points touched upon, when the explanations could only be of a fragmentary nature at best.

“ I may tell you—and I make no secret of it—that I have had numerous conversations with the beautiful spirit of Mrs. Parker ; of late, however, I have been forbidden (by my instructor) to hold converse with any spirit whatever, for reasons which in the present state of your knowledge upon this subject you can scarcely grasp. Of course I implicitly comply with the commands of such a powerful angel. The result has been that for several months I have never mentally communed with her, although I have been fully aware of her presence and desire to confer with me. However, this evening I felt her presence very strongly, and obtained permission for her to commune through my son, who has the faculty

of mental communion with spirits almost completely developed. . . . She then told me all about yourself, and greatly desired me to write you a few lines. With this request I am now complying.

“ . . . Now, my dear friend, I am quite satisfied that what I have written you concerning your wife you know to be true. Not so much from what I have written as from what you yourself have experienced. This being the case, then, you can rely upon it that every line, every word, I have penned you is true even to the minutest detail :—all my information has come from the same source, and that source is God Himself. Granted that I have never seen God, nor an angel, nor yet a spirit, but when you know my entire history for some years back, and it is a unique history, you will have no difficulty in perceiving the Divine nature of my information. I do not intend at present to explain anything more to you, for you will be able, I hope, very soon to read for yourself such intelligence as will astonish the Christian world ; that will put an end to all creeds—for they are but ignorant man’s ideas upon mysteries which he had no right in the past to try and solve, and which he could not solve with his dull, material brain without the solution were revealed to him by a spirit or an angel sent for that purpose—and form the basis of a religion in which true Christianity (faith and good works) will take the place of creeds.

“ I am aware that my communications are interesting to you, that you wonder how I got them, that you cannot deny their apparent veracity, but that you are unable to advance one single step forward without the key. So far so good, but then the case is not the same with those to whom you have communicated the information in your possession. Some doubt it because it does not blindly comply with the orthodox teaching of the Churches or even of Christ. Others would probably believe it if they could get more. These men are all your inferiors in progress and in privileges granted. You stand im-

measurably ahead of them, inasmuch as you have the power to commune mentally with spirits partially developed, and you know for an absolute certainty that your wife does come to you. You feel her presence, and can more or less commune with her, hence you have reached the first rung of the ladder, and your intelligence can more or less grasp the probability of what I have written you being true. These other gentlemen are not so specially privileged as you—they don't believe that Mrs. Parker is able to commune with you; their minds are material and cannot grasp the spiritual in its true sense. They cannot disassociate God from a material perfect man; they are aware that there is a spiritworld, and that there are spirits, but they are wholly unable to conjure up in their minds what a spirit is. They cannot grasp the fact that a spirit hath neither flesh nor bones, and that the spiritual condition is an eternal one, hence can have nothing to do with matter, which is temporary.

“These men, however learned they may be, cannot help you in any way, as it is not by wisdom that mysteries can be explained, for no man living save my son and myself knows the answers to the numerous mysteries which act as thorns by the wayside to the doubtful and sceptical man.

“Where did I get my information from? In order to answer this question in a satisfactory way it behoves me to explain to you how the world progresses. Man is gifted with a heavy, material brain which cannot advance unaided one iota from its normal condition. The brain itself, with its various convolutions, fissures, ventricles, &c., is not the originator of any ideas—how can it be?—matter itself cannot originate anything! The brain is simply the channel or passage through which knowledge, thoughts, ideas, &c., pass, and leave their impressions. It is the connecting link between the material and the spiritual, and is worked by the soul, which either translates material language into electric currents or *vice versa*. This being the case, the brain cannot suddenly become

more enlightened by itself without assistance from without or within, yet the world is steadily advancing through what is called man's ingenuity or genius. How, then, does man come by this new information or discovery? The world progresses solely and alone by revelation, but man in the past has been entirely ignorant of this fact, and attributes such progress to his own innate powers. Nothing of the kind! God has ordained that the world shall progress for certain clear and important reasons, and in carrying out this determination He selects certain persons as the particular channels through which it shall progress. Let us take, for instance, 'inventions.' God selects a certain person to be the inventor of something new, and if that person proves himself capable and willing, He sends an angel, or a Third or Fourth Sphere spirit, whose mission it is to suggest certain new ideas into his mind. These ideas generally rush like a flash through his brain, or they are gone again for the present, or he knows what to do but cannot explain himself.

"Revelation is nothing new, but has been going on since the world began to progress, a few years before the advent of Christ. God has adopted revelation as the method by which the world shall advance. All God's ways are grand and simple when fully understood! And now, having said so much, I tell you that all this wonderful information has been revealed to my son and myself by great and powerful angels, so that the knowledge of God by man shall be in keeping with his advanced attainments; and it was necessary that he should reach his present position before he could grasp the true nature of God.

"Does not coincide entirely with the teaching of Christ? It is almost impossible in the limited space of a letter to explain clearly how this comes about. There are several points of importance in this connection which should be touched upon, but for the present I must decline to enter into the subject; however, the answers

are so clear and so reasonable that no thoughtful man can fail to be convinced by them.

“It must be distinctly understood that a Christian has no need of this revelation—his faith is sufficient for him, and no amount of common sense, as opposed to faith, can dissuade him from the former. Neither is this revelation sent for the good of the sceptic or evil man, for their eternal properties prevent them from exercising faith. There are, however, two classes to whom this revelation is of all importance for their eternal welfare—but more of this later.

“Furthermore, no thoughtful Christian—no matter to what creed he belongs—when he has carefully considered the entire question of ‘eternal and eternity,’ can come to any other conclusion about the life upon earth than the one which I think was explained to you in a former letter. The soul being eternal, so likewise must all its properties be eternal, and if so then these properties are unchangeable.

“Faith is the test—the only test. Roughly speaking it is the earthly equivalent to the eternal property of goodness, which exists in all those souls whom God has determined shall live with Him during the future of eternity. Faith is essentially a property confined to life upon earth. There is no such thing as faith (in the earthly sense) in the spiritworld—it is knowledge or ignorance pure and simple. A faithful man upon earth knows through faith only of the mysteries of the Godhead and eternal life. After death, in the spiritworld, this faith becomes knowledge, for his spirit sees for itself what these mysteries are one after another—consequently he knows that God, the greatest mystery of all, is at the end of the journey, so he presses forward with the sure knowledge that he will ultimately reach Heaven.

“The faithless man upon earth denied God because he could not exercise faith—his eternal properties prevented him from doing so—having deliberately refused to accept assistance from the Holy Spirit. After death

this faithlessness becomes ignorance, hence he knows nothing about God, consequently does not miss Him, for upon earth he never knew what the love of God was.

“ . . . Your wife sends a simple message of dear remembrance to you.

“ I must now conclude with the request that you will thoroughly consider what I have communicated to you. It will enlarge your faith, and emblazon upon your soul an indelible picture of God as He really is, and reveal clearly His Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence.

“ Your faithful friend.”

Thus time slipped on, and Mrs. Parker's visits became fewer and at longer intervals ; and latterly when she did come it was generally because she was drawn to myself by sympathy with my feelings.

Towards the end of last year she again visited me two or three times in close succession, each time urgently entreating me to write her former husband. I promised to do so, then, when I realised the utter futility of even attempting to effect a change in any man's opinions upon such an important subject through the contents of a few letters, at the same time knowing that Dr. Parker exercised faith, therefore was assured of reaching Heaven, I reconsidered my decision and never wrote him.

However, as day after day and week after week passed by, I could all the time the stronger feel the desire of Dr. Parker himself praying me to come to his relief, as his soul was yearning greatly for more light, for then he must have been aware that he was about to face the inevitable. So strong and so pronounced was this feeling in myself that I approached Minerva upon the subject. She again advised me not to write him, undoubtedly for strong reasons of her own, but not, I am certain, prompted by any ungenerous motive.

The end came, and I felt as if a great void had been created in my midst, for I never thought for a moment

but that he would be alive, and be one to whom I could turn for support when the proper time came. His death was probably a greater shock to me than it was to any of his hearers, for although we were quite unknown to each other personally, yet we were in beautiful and complete harmony mentally and spiritually.

Here was another blow to my hopes indeed, and the only consolation open to me was to regard Dr. Parker's death as but one more disappointment in the innumerable succession of disappointments which have dogged my steps at every turn in this study of the occult, and which must ever follow the material into any investigation it may make into the immaterial. I had put my own interpretation upon the direction in which Dr. Parker would be of service to me, and of course was wrong :—indeed, this may be taken as a typical example of the way in which man has fallen into error about his religion, by putting his own ignorant constructions upon conditions about which he knew literally nothing.

Upon the evening of December 11, 1902, when listening to some music, I became conscious of the presence of Dr. Parker near me. It was like that of a dear old friend returned to talk with me—as they very frequently do in refuge and astonishment when once I have unconsciously drawn them here soon after death.

At first he tried to commune with me personally, but eventually his wife acted as interpreter, and then we carried on a long and enjoyable conversation, just as distinctly and with equal impression as if I had been talking with a friend upon earth. I learned from him the extent to which he had thought over my communications ; and so desirous had he been to know more that upon two occasions he very nearly sent over a messenger to try and find me out through my handwriting and the postmarks upon the envelopes. At first he was astonished that a man who knew so much upon religious matters should live such an isolated life, but upon deeper consideration he fully recognised that such

was absolutely necessary until the proper time came to communicate his knowledge to the world.

All the next day he was close beside me when writing—his wife reading my mind to him, and thus he was gaining information of a most engaging nature. A little incident here occurred which, although of no moment to me, strongly impressed Dr. Parker—still a novitiate to the ways of the spiritworld—with the high development to which the human brain can attain in the occult, as well as with the utter ignorance man is in generally of his unseen surroundings.

First of all it will be necessary for me to explain that the work upon which I am now engaged is of a very trying and exhausting nature, and what makes it more so is the knowledge that I am constantly surrounded by evil and frivolous spirits. They know very well that my present occupation is directly to benefit mankind, and anything for man's good of course is to their detriment and annoyance. This they let me feel in no uncertain manner, for they are well assured that their presence and influence are known to me, hence they are incessantly to the fore with their promptings. Indeed, at times their interference is so persistent and distressing that I am compelled to pray for protection against them, for the will-power alone is not always equal to the task of successfully coping with densely concentrated attacks from behind.

I was engaged at that time rendering some of my son's experiences into simple sentences, when I felt an evil thought suddenly force itself into my brain. Forgetful that Dr. Parker was behind me, I ejaculated, "Begone with you, you fool!" At once I felt that Dr. Parker was spiritually laughing at the comical nature of the situation, as well as in astonishment. His subsequent remarks were very pithy, and impressed me strongly, for they came from one who had but recently crossed over, and therefore could regard my words and treatment of this invisible fiend almost from a human

standpoint: "You sent that one about his business in proper style! To think of man's ignorance of the true source of evil! Doctor, you literally astonish me!"

That same evening I had another long and interesting conversation with Dr. Parker through my son. He told me that he had interviewed Minerva, and had been much struck with her knowledge and power, and that she had requested him to contribute a few remarks upon a certain subject. This he considered a very great honour, and would require diligent application on his part to make himself acquainted with the spiritual facts necessary to comply with this request. In answer to my expression of regret at his death, and thereby the loss of a powerful friend, he observed that for this reason alone was he sorry to leave the earth, for he felt that he could not advance until he knew that man had been put in possession of such further spiritual information as was awaiting him. And with regard to myself, he remarked that I might be friendless now, but that in a very short time after the public recognition of these works thousands and tens of thousands would be only too ready to support me in this great undertaking.

We parted, and he never returned until the evening of February 17, 1903, when he informed me that he had come to fulfil his promise to Minerva, and to express his happiness in his new life, as well as to wish God-speed to the work.

Such is my knowledge of the late Reverend Dr. Joseph Parker, of the City Temple, London. I little thought when I penned him the first letter that it would lead to such important results, or I should have made a note there and then of everything that transpired and every conversation held with Mrs. Parker.

All the statements in the foregoing account are true to the best of my remembrance, and possibly the two letters written to Dr. Parker are still extant; if so, I am willing that they should be published subject to any reservations I might wish to make.

CHAPTER XIV

I AM TAKEN UP INTO THE THIRD SPHERE *

February 21.—I am now within measurable distance of the end of my work in the spiritworld, but the undertaking which is immediately staring me in the face is superlatively beyond any journey I have performed in the past.

I had been told at the beginning of my explorations in the spiritworld that it would be to my honour to be taken up to the Third Sphere. Not so much for the purpose of obtaining any information—for I was not so ignorant but that I could grasp that everything seen would be totally beyond acceptance by my brain—as to satisfy myself upon the existence of such a region.

I had never seriously considered the magnitude of the undertaking until it was pending. In the past there had been no need to do so ; besides, I was then, comparatively speaking, ignorant of spiritual conditions as they actually are, but now, being somewhat indoctrinated into the theory and practice of spiritual existence and surroundings, I could grasp it in an appreciable degree.

The First Sphere, I now knew and could comprehend, embraced all the material worlds, from the solid earth to the most distant telescopic concentration of nebulous matter, and how far beyond it is impossible even to conjecture. The human system of reckoning distance is entirely at fault when employed to gauge such immeasurable space. All this distance had to be crossed before I reached the upper boundary of the lowest sphere of the spiritworld. This done, probably an equally

* See 2 Corinthians xii. 2-4.

tremendous area had to be negotiated in the Second Sphere. Then there were the two boundary currents to be penetrated, and, finally, the Third Sphere had to be traversed.

As far as my spiritual form was concerned the distance was of no moment whatever, but how about my poor body upon earth? Already a temporary wreck physically and mentally, how could it possibly withstand the strain? I dare not think about it; my brain steadfastly refused to cope with the situation, so I resigned myself with confidence once again into the powerful and skilful hands of Minerva. As a matter of fact, it was none of my business to agitate my brain with the "hows" and the "wherefores" of any of my approaching spiritual undertakings. My province was to foster my strength during intervals, and when the time came to explore then it was essentially my duty to consign myself unreservedly into the charge of a power superior to myself. But I am still like the next man—material and human—and cannot altogether prevent my mind from reverting to the care of my body. The instinct of self-preservation is still a prominent feature of my animal nature, and will not be kept in subjection all the time.

Minerva now stood before me upon this very important occasion, and stated that the time had arrived for me to be taken up into the Second and Third Spheres, there to behold for myself, and to bring back whatever information my brain could accept. She went on to say that the great difficulty which confronted her in the execution of this unparalleled expedition was to keep in touch with my brain, so that I might be in full possession of my senses when so far away from my body.

This difficulty Minerva had now made arrangements to overcome, for she had procured the services of another powerful spirit, who was to be stationed upon the line of communication, there to act as a restorer of the electric current of connection between my body and my spiritual form.

“And now, sir,” she continued, “the journey which you are about to take is the very furthest to which your powers are capable of going, for there must necessarily be a limit to your material properties. Come, let us be going !”

For a moment of time, whilst the stupendousness of it all flashed through my brain, I remained motionless. My immaterial form was then quickly personated, and almost immediately I stood beside my spiritual instructors. I looked around as my custom is, and there beheld the spirit who was to perform what was to me a very important office in my forthcoming journey.

Never had I seen my spiritual friends to better advantage than they now appeared—all of them bright and radiant and loving, eager in every respect to continue the work. There was no flaw or element of discord anywhere, and all waited for instructions from our powerful chief.

The procession then mechanically and almost instantaneously formed itself into proper order. In front, Minerva, refulgent in her majesty and dignity, of course took up her position. Not far behind, and within the radius of her power, came myself in the centre, Marian upon my left, and Louisa upon my right. The stranger and the fresh help brought up the rear.

We were now all ready to start. Once and once only before had this journey been accomplished by a soul under mortal bondage, but in what form it is impossible to say. The apostle Paul, when he was caught up into the Third Heaven, had himself but a very vague idea of the manner in which he was taken there: “whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth.” Nineteen centuries have nearly elapsed since that occurrence, and now the journey is about to be taken under circumstances advanced in the extreme, but in the last degree intelligible to every enlightened mind.

We started. Minerva wisely considered it best not to make the journey instantaneously, for it might have

produced a serious shock upon my material and restricted body. Nevertheless, we moved with terrific rapidity, for it took but a very short time indeed—a few seconds at most—before we arrived at the barrier separating the First from the Second Sphere.

I could feel myself quickly getting further and further away from my body, and as the distance increased between the earth and myself I gradually became weaker and weaker until I wondered whether my power would hold out until we reached our destination. In my rapidly exhausting condition it was a great relief when we slackened our pace and Marian pointed out to me the barrier between the first two spheres, apparently flying towards us with incredible speed. We hurried up to it, passed through it, then suddenly stopped.

Of my own power it is very doubtful whether I could have penetrated through this boundary current, but making the journey, as I did, within the radius of Minerva's power, I never felt the least check when we dashed through it.

This barrier appeared to me as a thin veil of power. Its brightness was almost of a golden hue, and it generally presented an inexplicable transparency. In no sense of the word was it flimsy in appearance, but impressed me as being a power in every respect equal to its requirements. Its whole wall of front was lost in space in all directions, but only that portion of it in our immediate vicinity appeared to possess a bright, golden hue.

As soon as we came to a standstill in our upward journey the new spirit, who had accompanied us for this purpose, now took up his position, and assumed his duty as current restorer. Instantly I experienced a great relief, and again felt fresh and active. I was so taken by surprise at this change that for the moment I could not realise how it had been produced, but it did not take me long to awaken to the reality and satisfy myself exactly as to the way in which this spirit had so remarkably relieved me of all strain.

We now resumed our journey, still travelling upwards at a rapid pace. I felt a terribly long way from my body, so far that I dare not even think about it, but held my thoughts occupied in anticipation of what was coming.

At last we drew up in what I was informed was the very interior of the Second Sphere. I looked about me in perfect bewilderment. Spirits were clearly to be seen in all directions, here in groups, and there slowly and gracefully gliding about in space. I was forcibly impressed by the fact that I was no longer in space as it is noticeable in the First Sphere. It was an entirely new atmosphere to me. Space itself was the same, but the effect it produced upon my spiritual form incomparably surpassed anything experienced in the First Sphere. Now I was in an atmosphere balmy, soothing, and delightful. All the properties it possessed were essentially spiritual in their nature, still my condition was sufficiently spiritual to be capable of appreciating them. There is nothing material with which I can compare my feelings at that moment, therefore the utmost I can do is to say that the atmosphere of the First Sphere is material-like and chilly, whereas that of the Second Sphere is bright, warm, and pleasing. But even this comparison is altogether inadequate, for the conditions are essentially different in every respect; besides, the effect which space even in the First Sphere has upon me is immeasurably beyond any sensations experienced upon a material world, for the elements more closely approach flawlessness and harmony.

The properties of space in the Second Sphere are highly pleasing to a spirit, nor yet can the human mind appreciate such a superior existence as one would pass were one an inhabitant of this sphere. No wonder that frivolous spirits say that they are happy and contented, and that life passed in roaming about this world is an enjoyable one! If the conditions which prevail here are considered only mediocre as compared with those

which constitute the upper spheres, then man indeed is in miserable circumstances. Luckily for him, he will never be able to realise the extent to which this is the case until he is done with matter for ever.

I saw numerous sights in this world, but I am wholly at a loss how to explain what I did see, for everything was spiritual entirely, and of a more exalted order than anything the material brain is able to comprehend. I am fully aware that my spiritual entity did behold spectacles which were pleasing in the extreme, but my brain had no deeper impression than this bare fact—it is impervious to such advanced currents.

I was greatly interested as I journeyed about with Marian, who alone accompanied me. In every direction we encountered spirits engaged in various ways, not as a rule in large numbers, but in clusters here and there all over. They presented the very ideal of contentment, but I could not understand what they were doing. Everything seemed to be so peaceful and attractive, unmarred by malicious interference from discordant powers, which is a condition so foreign to any with which man is acquainted.

We must have traversed a considerable region of this sphere, Marian the while communing with me.

“Sir,” she began, “you remember your first visit to this world?”

“Yes, Marian,” I replied; “is it likely that I can ever forget it?”

“You remember, sir, that I then said you had very important work to do in this world, and you replied that you were not capable of doing anything great? Now sir, that you have finished your work here, you see that you have been equal to discharging whatever duty you were required to do.”

“I admit it, Marian. What you say is perfectly true; still, for all that I cannot understand why I in particular should have been called upon to undertake this work.

especially when there are so many men who devote their entire lives to religion."

"Sir, you do not understand this subject in its proper light. Omnipotence always chooses the best methods, and ever has important reasons."

"Well, Marian, I hope my best has been good enough. Personally I do not see how I could have done better, for there are so very many obstacles to hinder one in such a work."

"You have nothing to reproach yourself with upon that score, sir. Your part of the work has been done well. It has been a much more difficult and abstruse undertaking than you can imagine, and you have been the one chiefly concerned, for everything depended upon your capability. No man will ever be able to understand in its true light the intricate and important work that has been done under this mission, nor the extent to which it will hereafter ramify. Minerva, myself, and Louisa are all kept busy after one visit preparing for your next. It is work of a supernatural kind altogether, and just within the capacity of a highly endowed brain. Spirit and man are so distinctly different that to bring the two into apposition is a feat of knowledge as well as of skill. Minerva is the one who has worked this extraordinarily abnormal undertaking to its present efficient state. I have educated you to spiritual existence and requirements, and Louisa has lately been of great service in connection with your mental faculties—a very important and necessary work."

"And now, Marian, that I am finished, or nearly finished, this work I am not sorry personally, but spiritually I am extremely so. My body is at present completely exhausted, and is ever increasingly rebelling against the unnatural treatment it is receiving, so that, humanly speaking, I shall be glad when it is over, for it has been a greater strain than ever I anticipated."

"Such is a wise wish on your part, for when once the power to visit this world is withdrawn you will never

again cross its threshold in your present form. Your brain will again be set at liberty, and then it will soon lose its supernatural development. Further, there is nothing for an imperfect spiritual composition like yourself to do here except to collect information and that is now finished as far as is allowed. One must be a complete spirit before one can be happy and at peace in this world. No, sir. You will be wise if you never wish to visit here again until you come in a true spiritual form."

"Yes, Marian, I am convinced of that; but one cannot altogether prevent the desire from occasionally manifesting itself."

"Well, sir, after your work here is finished you can always look upon such a possibility as a thing of the past."

All this time we had been moving about in a delicious spiritual element, and I had been quite forgetful of my body. Now, however, that my mind was momentarily unoccupied, a sudden reminder of its deserted condition made itself felt.

We returned to Minerva, myself delighted with the experience, for we had yet to visit the Third Sphere.

"Well, sir," began Minerva, "you have seen much but understood comparatively little? Your present spiritual form is insufficient to comprehend conditions such as were around you—the information is not lawful to the human brain! Now let us continue our journey, and you shall visit the Third Sphere. It is a superior world to this, therefore you will be still less able to understand much, but a material impression is always acceptable to a material existence, for in this instance it will be proved that my teaching has been correct."

We now resumed our respective positions, and were again rapidly travelling through space. Very soon we came to the boundary which separates the Second Sphere from the Third. We passed through the veil, in all respects very similar to the previous one, and then came

to a full stop. We must have crossed an incalculable breadth of space, for now I was again feeling very exhausted and powerless. Here the stranger spirit was stationed upon the line of communication between myself and the previous spirit, similarly stationed at the boundary of the First Sphere, in order that he might utilise his power as a current of connection, then once more I was relieved from the severe tension.

The rest of us now advanced, and almost immediately we reached the heart of this sphere. The very instant we came to a standstill an indescribably soothing sensation came over me, and I felt like an intruder in a region wholly beyond my deserts. It reminded me of a ploughman in his mud-bespattered boots marching into my lady's drawing-room ! The elements in evidence were in every respect manifest in a higher degree of intensity than anything to be found in the Second Sphere. The charm and beauty of it all was entrancing, and the effect was strongly imprinted in my feelings. I became oblivious of everything, and only longed to stay where I was. I thought to myself as I remained almost stupefied with the ravishing properties prominent in this sphere—what would man upon earth, with his humble surroundings, not give to be able even to imagine such a place and condition as this ? The peace was unspeakable, the harmony bewitching, and the profound sensation of happiness so utterly beyond the loftiest imagination of the most creative mind that the unlawfulness of man ever knowing anything about it is perfectly safeguarded against encroachment.

This is the home of Marian, Louisa, and my late spiritual acquaintance Dr. Parker, and well might the latter enlarge to a superlative degree upon the attractiveness and splendour of his new existence !

Until I found myself in the heart of this sphere and amidst such sublime peace I never really grasped the depth of my ignorance. If this was only the Third Sphere, what must the Sixth be like ? What must

Heaven and the Glorified state be like? So this was the abode which the honest, faithful, hard-working spirits so much exulted in! No surprise, indeed, that they are anxious to become pure and spotless if perfection merits them a life and a home ineffably superior to even this incomparably grand one!

Here was I in the Third Sphere, surrounded by elements so advanced that words will not describe them; how, then, can I convey to man an account of arrangements* my brain refuses to accept? What was I, only a half spirit, capable of doing or learning in such an unapproachable region? And this half-spirit circumscribed by the limits of material senses! How could these material senses cope with currents of information descriptive of a world where nothing material exists, and where the immaterial are of an exalted and indefinable nature? I was even at a complete loss when there, and never once did I leave Minerva's side. The feelings and impressions of my spiritual entity were unmistakable, but how could I tell whether they were what are commonly experienced by complete spirits?

I was now in a position to look back upon man's ignorance and sinful existence in a new and real light, and the stamp of it was indelible. I tried my utmost to think of his surroundings in their best aspect, but they only appeared the more circumscribed and menial when compared with the elevating conditions so much in evidence where I now was. I thought of my body; it seemed so far away that I should never be able to reach it again. It was, as it were, at the other end of eternal space from the region in which my soul was at this moment regaling itself. I dare not think of the distance that intervened, it was too stupendous even to contemplate. The star most remote from the earth was in reality near it in comparison to myself. The First

* There is nothing new in the spiritworld, simply certain "arrangements" of the existing elements—"I go to 'prepare' a place for you."

Sphere had been crossed as if by thought, and yet it included everything temporary. Then the Second Sphere with its immense, but appreciably shorter, breadth across, and now I stood in the centre of the Third Heaven—the utmost limit to which even Minerva with all her power could take me ! Assuredly I was here, but absolutely useless as far as acquiring information and being able to impart it to man were concerned ! It gratified my higher senses and assuaged my curiosity, but then that was all my visit was intended to accomplish.

I beheld spirits as they were in their home, gliding about in peace and happiness. I felt how pronouncedly ignorant and vastly inferior I was to any seen around me, engaged in what I was totally unable to understand. Somehow, a feeling took possession of me which convinced me that I was utterly incapable of comprehending anything of importance in this marvellous world, yet there was ever present with me an ardent desire to see and understand my surroundings. I yearned to have something to say about the abode of hard-working spirits, no matter how little, but the hope was a vain one.

“Well, my subject,” observed Minerva with force and decision, “you are now present in the Third Sphere. It is a region about which man, with his circumscribed mental properties, can never hope to know anything, or even to appreciate anything. There is not a single property existent in this sphere concerning which man has the least idea ; and what is more, his perceptive faculties are not intended even to grasp them faintly. So much the more, then, will he esteem them when he has advanced to that halcyon position from which he will be at liberty to explore what and where he likes. Here there are no interfering influences, no laws of trespass, no exclusions because the traveller cannot afford to pay, no insolence of office or authoritative person to forbid, no fear of becoming weary and sleepy, no hunger nor thirst—all these and such as these are mundane restrictions. Here the soul is free, absolutely free, and

at liberty to wend its course whither it wishes, both in this sphere and in those beneath it. At death the soul is done for ever with those limitations and restraints with which man is alone acquainted. Never again will it be compelled to grope slowly about under difficulties and dangers, for here it is eternally freed ; it knows naught save happiness, and is not confined by time or distance. No language of sound is employed to curb the soul, for in this respect also it is far and away in advance of man.

“Everything in the spiritworld is superior to everything in the material world. Man does not and cannot realise what is in store for his weary soul after it has been freed from bondage.

“But now, sir, you cannot possibly derive more benefit by remaining here any longer. Your spiritual self has absorbed everything it is competent to appreciate, so now we had better return without further delay, as such will only be productive of extra exhaustion upon your body.”

I was reluctant to leave such a realm of bliss for a world of care and trouble. I took in one last, deep, spiritual breath of the unutterable charms around me, and with a pang of sorrow retreated to my protector, and waited her bidding to return to my body.

“Now, my pupil,” Minerva continued in what I thought were pathetic accents, “this is your last visit on duty to the spiritworld. You shall again return for a farewell greeting, but this is the last occasion upon which you will receive information in your spirit form. And here I must state, as you now stand at the absolute zenith and extreme of human and material attainment, that you have completed your part of this great work to my entire satisfaction. I am full well aware that there have been enormous difficulties to surmount, but under these extraordinary circumstances surely such ought to be expected.

“This your crowning achievement practically brings

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this part of my work to a close, but not yet is the whole object of my mission discharged—not until the world receives the results of my labour. Then I shall have finished my work in this world, when Glorification alone will be required to fill up the measure of my happiness.”

This said, Minerva bowed to me, and forthwith assumed her position in the lead. Without loss of time we began the return journey, and rapidly made towards the Second Sphere. We drew up right in front of the stranger spirit, who immediately resumed his customary position in the rear ; then again we hastened onwards across the vast region of the Second Sphere. Suddenly we were face to face with the first spirit, posted upon our line of communication between the First and Second Spheres. He was also taken into the group, and the journey instantly continued.

We had now but one unfathomable realm of space to traverse in this my last return from my last great spiritual undertaking. Distance was rapidly annihilated. Nearer and nearer we approached my body. At first it seemed like the faint reverberation of a distant ringing bell ; louder and louder it sounded as the intervening space diminished, until at last we stopped at a lonely spot high up on the Rocky Mountains, beside my poor, spent body. Powerless and exhausted, I bid them all adieu and retired to cherish my mortal frame.

The relief was indescribable ; but oh ! the difference between what I had left behind at one end of the journey and what had greeted me at the other ! I was once again a material being, and felt the restrictions greater than ever before. Certainly ignorance of such an experience as this is bliss, for once one is permitted to breathe such a delightful and exhilarating atmosphere the charm of his own no longer attracts him. He truly realises now what ignorance previously had hidden from his view !

CHAPTER XV

FAREWELL TO THE SPIRITWORLD

February 22.—It was difficult for me to realise that my labours in the spiritworld were at an end, and that now the time had arrived to bid a long farewell to my spiritual co-labourers in this work, yet such was the case. Had my body and brain been in their wonted vigour it is difficult to say how I should have acquitted myself. Omnipotence, however, overrules everything for the best, thus I suppose it was for the best that my material body should have been reduced to its present condition.

Such was a fact, and a fact concerning which there was no over-riding. The inevitable had come, and now I was about to personate my spiritual form solely to bid adieu to those who had been so kind and long-suffering with me in my work.

Just as usual I was welcomed by Marian and Louisa, and just as in the past we slowly glided towards the old trysting spot, where the placid and evenly balanced Minerva had so often awaited my arrival. Yes, she was there, serene and dignified as ever! And the stranger I noticed in his exact position as of yore, with that well-drilled presence which had so frequently excited my admiration. Both were there for the last time!—we were all there for the last time!

In subdued dignity Minerva observed :—

“ Now, my subject, your labours in this world are at an end. You have performed your portion extremely well, and all are satisfied. Indeed, all who have been connected with this abstruse mission have discharged their offices admirably. It has been a very unnatural

and an extremely delicate undertaking, but now it is finished, and I think in a way that man will be able to follow, nevertheless it will call for concentrated attention and thought, and require that each communication be well meditated over before the next one is considered."

"Yes, Minerva," I replied, "I fully believe that the world will appreciate your revelations, for behind all that has been stated there is betrayed the unmistakable presence of a supernatural, all-powerful Being. Man cannot escape the conviction that you came and executed this work with authority from Omnipotence. You have furnished him with the means whereby he can the better and the more nobly utilise his common sense and higher judgment. Indeed, man in time will recognise his great indebtedness to you for this enlightenment."

"Certainly, sir, when he realises the value of the information vouchsafed to him. But here let me add that I was selected for this work, consequently the entire responsibility of its completion is thrown upon myself; and if I had not finished it in a way commensurate with its importance, then it would have proved that I was not qualified for the undertaking. But Omnipotence makes no mistakes, hence I have been fully equal to the task of executing this mission properly. It has occupied the greater part of my time from entering the spiritworld to the present date, for there have been a great many more obstacles to overcome, requiring careful judgment and manipulation, than man will ever be able to understand. Now that this part of my labour is ended I am grateful, for personally a great burden will be removed from my mind; at the same time I was extremely happy planning which would be the best course to adopt in order to lay before the world the requisite information in as little space as possible, and yet to disclose it in such a way that any one who wishes can comprehend.

"But, sir, great credit is due to you, for you are the earthly agent through whom this work is transferred into human language. You are the one upon whom all

are depending. Also to your father who puts these communications into book form ; great credit is due to him, for all parts of this work are most important and very difficult to execute."

The stranger spirit then advanced towards me in his usual style.

"Well, my friend," I remarked, "are you going to remain on record for ever simply as the useful stranger, or will you give me some definite information about yourself?"

"My mission, sir, is not to converse, but to perform whatever duties my superior may call upon me to discharge ; but I desire to wish you a kind farewell, for I have taken great interest in your work here."

"Will you be sorry when it is at an end?"

"Yes, sir, I shall indeed ; but I am certain to get another mission for I must still continue to advance."

Here my enigmatic friend "The Stranger" bid me a respectful adieu, bowed, and then retired to his customary position.

Minerva now advanced towards me and asked if it were my wish to take a last look around at the marvels of space, but as I was then in no such humour we all slowly returned to my body.

Once arrived there Minerva informed me that Marian would still continue to be my guide, and that Louisa would also for some time remain with me to restore to their normal those brain powers which were now unduly excited by the supernatural development they had undergone.

Minerva herself would retire to her sphere, and there wait for certain things to transpire before she could continue her work.

"And now, sir," she uttered in deep meaning, "when you retire for good into your body you will be well advised not to attempt to personate your spiritual form again, because I shall then straightway reduce the power exercised over your brain, which has been necessary in order

to enable you to accomplish this work, and it will be to your own gain to regard a revisit to the spiritworld as an impossibility. You personally receive no benefit. You were qualified to gather information, and that was the sole reason why you were permitted into the spiritworld, but now that this investigation is at an end you will do well to cease thinking about it. None but youth could have performed the work you have just completed, and then only one selected and specially endowed, but now you are rapidly outgrowing the age."

I lingered about awhile absorbed in memories of the past. All my spiritual co-workers then grouped around me as we exchanged our farewell greetings, ere I retired for good into my material body.

At last the parting came, then I sought refuge from my feelings in my poor mortal case.

Instantly I was seized with a deep yearning for one last glimpse of spiritual presence. Yes, they were just as I had left them a moment before—all bright and happy! I cast a final glance into space around me, and was once again assured of its magic charms. Then came the final words of my great and worthy mentor: "Sir, never again will you visit this world until you join us for good; for immediately upon your return you will feel the pressure being removed. Good-bye, my noble subject!"

As Minerva had stated, most unmistakably did I feel as if a great weight were being slowly lifted from me. The relief was pronounced. I was gradually becoming more and more free from that constant oppression and crushing power which had so continuously overborne me during the period of my spiritual labours.

When I recognised the relief as more than of a passing nature, the idea struck me to try and see if I could again possibly personate my spirit form. I would not have been human had I been devoid of curiosity in such a remarkable issue as this. I did try, but the attempt was futile, for no change whatever took place; indeed,

I never made the slightest show of leaving my body :— Minerva's words were correct, and I was now shut out from those premises into which it is not lawful for mortal man to enter.

The work is done ! My work is done ! It has been a great labour, but a labour upon which I have willingly sacrificed myself. Speaking as an individual, I know not the future of this great revelation, but of this I am perfectly satisfied—that no man, nor body of men, nor nation, nor peoples who have thoughtfully perused Minerva's revelations will ever again be able to divest their minds of the knowledge, the truth, and the common sense therein once and for ever impressed. The result of our labours will eventually benefit every living soul upon earth—from the emperor upon his throne to the meanest criminal in his cell, from the money-grubbing bloodsucker to the poorest and most obscure outcast upon earth.

CHAPTER XVI

FAREWELL TO "TIME"

October 1, 1903.—It is with a heavy heart and feelings overweighted with sadness that I, William Teasdale Wilson, take up my pen to record the melancholy and seemingly cruel termination of such noble self-sacrifice as that exhibited by my son, William Norman Wilson.

No attentive reader of the foregoing pages can possibly have failed to estimate, more or less at its real value, the severe strain, both mental and physical, requisite for the adequate discharge of the great and supernatural task which my son was called upon to execute as his life's work.

None save myself, however, will ever be able accurately to appreciate the full measure of self-abnegation required in the performance of this abstruse undertaking. From the date of its visible inception in the year 1893, until its exalted consummation on February 22, 1903, it has occasioned a continuous exhaustive tension upon the mental powers of every person brought within its compass. More particularly has this been the case with those upon whom the brunt of the work has fallen, and in my son especially has the result been serious from a human standpoint, inasmuch as having been latterly the principal in this invisible research, so has he been called upon to pay the price of such privileged position.

It is scarcely necessary at this late stage to refer in any but a cursory way to the very active part my son has taken in the occult operations absolutely necessary to the compilation of this remarkable and epoch-making revelation.

He was the one to whom the spirit of my father first appeared. He was the chief witness to the domestic disturbance that took place in my house on the first apparent advent of spiritual interference. Soon after arrival in this dreary wilderness, incompletely educated though he was, nevertheless he was required to submit to a severe illness, lasting for many months, in order to bring his strong bodily frame under subjection, and fit it for the work so soon to be imposed upon him. In the year 1898 he was the one to whom Minerva made herself known in the discharge of her third mission, after those of his mental powers which would necessarily be called into operation in any communications she might wish to make to him had been gradually developed.

Through his refined and highly endowed brain, Minerva revealed to the world the true nature of the human soul, the general circumstances that existed in the eternity of the past, the reason why matter was created, the omniscient purpose of the life on earth, the condition that will obtain in the great eternity of the future, the beautiful and accurate explanation of what Election is, the mystery of the Godhead, and established for the first time a reasonable, truth-abounding philosophy of the Christian religion, without any contradictory element entering into its composition. A philosophy literally admitting of no argument whatever from any thoughtful and faith-possessing person, and disclosing to the evil-crushed; yearning soul of man a loving and perfectly just Heavenly Father, with all His complete eternal attributes voluntarily in active operation in order that the eternity of the future might be one of happiness to each unchangeable, indestructible, eternal soul, in whatever position his inherent properties might constrain him to attain to and recognise as his heaven of eternal bliss.

Nor yet was my great son allowed respite even after this arduous undertaking, as well as that of outlining another work not intended to be submitted to public

consideration, but he was called upon to prove the veracity of the doctrines (if such they may be called) contained in Minerva's first work, by making explorations in the invisible spiritworld.

Not for a moment did he hesitate to obey instructions, but allowed his already overtaxed powers to submit to a process of subdivision of the severest and most exacting nature. However much he might express to myself—his dearest confidant in such matters—his fear to face the task allotted him, and however much he was convinced that such supernatural work was sapping out his life's blood and brain's power, still, when the time came to respond to duty's call, he was there with the first note of the summons.

And what shall I say of this work? What will his intelligent fellow creatures think and say of it when they have grasped the almost unfathomable importance of its contents?—the vast and hitherto almost mythical spiritworld explored from end to end, as far as the human brain could receive it, and converted into an actual, substantial, and yet invisible reality; the spirit divided into his component powers, and denuded of his mystery; evil interviewed in their very haunts; the frivolous exposed in their naked emptiness; the faithful jubilant in the realisation that faith with them has now given place to knowledge; the sun explored and revealed in a new light; other worlds visited, and examples of a similar process of separation in vogue upon them disclosed to man; important spiritual laws explained; man's position in the universe clearly defined; a distinct reason given why Christ selected this particular world, upon which to subject the Eternal Perfect Power and Life; and, finally, the stupendous journey into the heart of the Third Heaven intelligibly undertaken. Yes! and yet there is scarcely a line in this entire work that the simplest-minded reader cannot clearly comprehend.

The complete revelation, whatever effect it may have produced upon its spiritual promoters, discloses in its

every phase that it was not being vouchsafed to man free of sacrifice.

The repeated mental and physical collapse of my boy, the constantly recurrent need for rest, and the necessity to call in powerful spiritual assistance, all testify to the havoc that was being wrought in a constitution purposely undermined in order that the physical might be almost entirely subservient to the mental, so that it might allow the subtle and highly educated brain-centres uninterruptedly to discharge their important functions.

With my son's last visit to the spiritworld, and pathetic parting from his powerful angelic tutors, his work on earth was completed. The ravage to his system generally was beyond repair, proving that his frequently reiterated complaints of exhaustion were not without substantial grounds.

It was indeed a painful and trying spectacle to witness my beloved son daily and hourly fading before my very eyes and yet be almost helpless to assist him. No ministering angel was now in attendance upon him to repair his ever-increasing lesions, and Minerva, having finished her work, had retired to her sphere, consequently she never visited him. Marian might certainly be at her post of duty near him, but he seldom felt and never communed with her.

For weeks he gradually lost ground, despite all our most strenuous endeavours to relieve him, until at length in despair he requested Marian to bring Minerva to him. She immediately responded to the summons, but was quite unable to help him, for all the power of her mission had been withdrawn now that it was ended.

Visibly he pined and drooped, although in the very spring-time of life. His brain began to manifest distinct signs of morbid change, due to the hypernatural development to which it had been subjected, and repeatedly he lapsed into a muttering, incoherent rambling. Both mitral and aortic valves of his heart became seriously diseased. His features assumed that peculiar cyanotic

appearance so indicative of cardiac mischief, and the tumultuous vibration of both carotid arteries was alarming to witness.

At length the time came when he could but with difficulty walk, so that the sum total of his daily exercise was limited to a few moments in the open air. And, finally, his debility became so extreme that an insidious form of hypostatic congestion of both lungs seized him, slowly but surely freeing his soul from earthly bondage.

Manifest though all this increasing debility was, and pointing, as it most assuredly did, directly to one way of ending, still none of us, least of all myself, dared to realise that such a thing was even possible seeing that the work was apparently far from complete.

The end came on the morning of June 29, 1903. I was first awakened to the certainty of what was about to happen when hastily taking a bite of breakfast, by suddenly feeling a clear, powerful voice penetrate through my brain with the words: "The Angel of Death has come to take the beloved of the Master away; his work upon earth is over, and his reward awaits him."

The shock of this news was terrible to bear, but somehow I felt compelled to return to my son and tell him openly and tenderly that the end was near. With haggard countenance, sunken eyes, and cold, clammy sweat standing in beads on his forehead and face, he gave me one pitiful look of despair. Not a word was spoken, but I gently placed his noble head upon my left shoulder, and so we sat until his agony ceased—when the temporal no longer held sway over the eternal, when the human had become subordinate to the spiritual, and when all sight and knowledge of material had gone for ever. Slowly he then raised himself up, bent his head forward with eyelids closed, and gazed with spiritual vision into the eternal world. What a truly magnificent spectacle he must have beheld, for every now and again a smile of pleasure and happiness lit up his features, and his gaze increased in its eagerness. For twenty

minutes this was continued, then the Angel of Death suddenly snapped the bonds, and the soul of my pure, grand boy had left all his troubles behind, had for ever forsaken his worn-out earthly case, and had attained his resurrection or restoration to eternal freedom again.

Truly "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform," for not in the most gloomy moments of my meditation upon this work, and the future in store for myself in connection with it, had I ever imagined it possible that such a calamity could befall me.

Sorrow filled our hearts to an extreme degree, and yet it seemed almost impossible that he should have left us in person for good. Certainly it was not long before I felt his invisible presence near me, happy to a degree, and full of sympathy for us in the grief which we must inevitably feel at such a loss, although we were fully aware that the gain was great to our son.

On the afternoon of this day I felt constrained to enter the death-chamber, and if possible resume the close and loving attachment that existed between father and son. The moment I entered the room I became cognisant of the fact that I was in the presence of the illustrious dead, and I could feel the influence of some great power in my near vicinity. So intense, indeed, was the presence that I hastily beat a retreat, only to be seized a few moments later with a desire to return, so irresistible as to compel me to obey.

On this visit my highly educated nerve-centres were still more emphatically impressed that there was some powerfully endowed, though invisible, presence in the room, so that I abruptly came to a standstill. Suddenly a clear mental voice thrilled through my brain, saying: "Approach with reverence: I am guarding this body; it is a valuable body!"

In reply I stammered out, "You've taken my boy away!"

"He is not dead; he is still doing a great work!" and so we conversed for some time. I was informed that

this Glorified angel had been sent down especially to guard this body, which was the earthly remains of a great and holy soul, whose exalted duty it had been on earth to discharge the work now completed. That in human guise his true individuality had been entirely obliterated, but now his soul had regained its eternal freedom, having been the first soul to leave the earth who knew exactly what awaited him after death, and that untold numbers of angels had been present to welcome him at his resurrection ; indeed, on no previous occasion had there ever been such an assembly of angels and bright spirits in any one locality of the First Sphere.

The astounding gravity of these remarks at first non-plussed me, for such thoughts of course had never passed through my brain. Mature reflection, however, revealed to me the almost certain truth they contained, but it was now too late to evince towards this soul, although materially speaking my son, the love and respect that was his due.

Two days later we buried this humble-minded youth—removed from comfort and plenty at an early age, to pass the remainder of his days on earth in a struggle for existence, alternated by pursuing an exalted duty for the benefit alone of those who are in doubt, hence are unable to determine which way to shape their course—on the open prairie, far from the haunts of civilisation, but in perfect unison with his unpretentious and retiring nature.

His simple funeral was attended by almost all the residents of the nearest settlement, thirteen miles away, and to the delight of some and astonishment of others, they heard a clear and definite reason given for the life on earth, a new and beautiful interpretation of the “resurrection of the dead,” and that the eternity of the future would be one of happiness to all, in keeping with the attributes of an Eternally Just Heavenly Father.

What a void was created in our home, in our family circle ! In what a serious plight I individually found

myself—robbed of my right-hand support, the one upon whom I mainly depended for increased knowledge upon spiritual affairs !

Truly my feelings were at zero when I seriously considered my straitened circumstances ! For ten years have I been literally bound hand and foot, and barely allowed the necessities of life. From the date of my victory over evil influence and firm assertion of faith in the Godhead have I been led on step by step—nay more, forced on gently but firmly from one stage to another of this remarkable *dénouement*. Deeper and deeper into the abstruse and unseen have I been helplessly pushed, until at last I am literally overwhelmed with information upon matters of the most vital importance to a large proportion of the human race. And now here am I suddenly and unexpectedly deprived of the cherished material support of a marvellously endowed son, and apparently thrown upon my own resources.

Such is the brief outline of the closing days of a truly noble man, who unselfishly gave his life for the benefit of others, who, having put his hand to the plough, tenaciously and unhesitatingly held on to the end. Through his instrumentality in a great measure the true and accurate interpretation of the Christian religion is being disclosed to man, in its simple and soul-satisfying completeness, which for certain admirably defined reasons was not, and could not be, grasped in its literal meaning by the disciples of old.

The profession of Christianity has been denuded of every anomalous and contradictory element it contained, stripped of all its false clothing in the shape of rites, dogmas, and theories, and revealed in its glorious majesty of—simple faith and good works.

The creative power behind all has been explained to the scientist, be he faithful or faithless, as far as the human brain at present is able to acknowledge it.

An explanation of the true nature of life and matter

has been disclosed to the biologist, and to the evenly endowed, thoughtful man, anxious to advance, an exalted vista has been exposed to view, so that not long hence he will have entered upon a new dispensation, and the final era of his progress—an era in which advance will be upon a lofty and noble scale, in a direction wholly undreamt of at present, and the limit will not be reached until mind and matter are brought to a standstill and are absolutely unable to penetrate deeper into the maze of the eternal condition.

NOTE BY W. T. WILSON

February 15, 1906.

I FEEL it a duty incumbent upon myself, in order to complete this work, to give some brief account of my son's life in and passage through the spiritworld. It will then be seen how true Minerva has been in her teaching that the soul, by its life on earth, establishes for itself its own rate of progress, either through the spiritworld or to that position in it beyond which none have aspirations.

My son's life in his material body had been one devoted entirely to good works of the very highest order—indeed, to such a degree had he carried this virtue that it really cost him his life, and “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” On this account, therefore, in accordance with the principles promulgated through this revelation, he was entitled to rapid reward in the spiritworld. It may also be added, that he was in his twenty-third year when he passed on, hence he had, comparatively speaking, few sins to atone for, always taking into consideration the life he must have led on earth.

Now let us examine into my son's history in the spirit-world, and see how it corroborates Minerva's interpretation of the reward meted out to the one who practises good works almost in the superlative degree.

My son died upon June 29, 1903, and on July 1 he was buried in the graveyard near my house made for the purpose. I myself, in obedience to command, performed the burial ceremony, for reasons which I think will be apparent to all readers of these works.

Very soon after our friends had departed my son paid me a short and very affectionate visit. He stated that at once after death he had been taken high up into the Fourth Sphere, and was now intensely happy. In this sphere he did not remain long—only three weeks—proving that the sins for which he had to make atonement must have been few and trivial.

On July 21, 1903, he was raised into the Fifth Sphere ; thus he had accomplished his regeneration, and now only the few blemishes and flaws in his character remained to be toned down to the level of pure love.

His passage through this sphere was very rapid, and what work he was required to discharge was comparatively light, and was but a continuation in another direction of that which he had performed on earth.

On August 9, 1903, he was described to me as looking very bright and beautiful, with a crown of power overhead. About this time he frequently visited us, but never referred to his position or duties.

On June 2, 1904, he was admitted into the Sixth Sphere, through which sphere also his progress was particularly rapid. From this date his visits gradually became less frequent, his inability to remain long on earth was increasingly pronounced, and his duties were confined to that sphere alone.

On June 11, 1905, he visited me and stated that his work in the spiritworld was finished, and that he was about ready for Glorification.

On June 29, 1905, the second anniversary of his passage over, we held a most pathetic interview with him, but he was now so far away and so near perfection that he could only remain on earth a few moments.

On July 1, 1905, he again visited us. He was extremely powerful, and was now awaiting his last summons. Dr. Parker afterwards was beside me, and said that to look at my son was the most beautiful sight he had beheld since entering the spiritworld.

On July 8, 1905, our last interview took place, but concerning it I quote from my diary :—

“Almost immediately after breakfast I went out on horseback to ride round the ranch. Very soon I felt an influence near me prompting that Norman was about to visit me for the last time. I hurried through with my work so as to get home as soon as possible. About a mile from the house I felt that my son was beside me. I went straight into my study on my return. My beloved was present with me in what I could detect as a very lofty and pure influence. His remarks, of course, will not bear repetition ; for the most part they had reference to his work on earth and his atonement in the spiritworld ; that forthwith he would be admitted into Heaven and be Glorified. He requested me to stand up, and then he silently blessed me. He then asked that his mother might be present ; he also blessed her, and said that she was still his dear and good mother—ininitely more so than when on earth. He observed that his power was now of such a nature that he could scarcely utilise it on earth, hence was not able to commune with his brothers and sister, but would likewise visit and bless them. He promised to convey loving messages to our Glorified relations. He admonished me to persevere steadfastly in the work and then a similar reward would be my lot, and that my troubles here were almost at an end. His power all this time was gradually getting weaker, until finally he was compelled to wish us a long adieu, and then he left us both standing up to honour our great son. Dr. Parker was now the only one left on the scene. He stated that clouds of angels had accompanied my son, and now they had all gone with him to speed him on his last and greatest journey. The appearance of my boy, he observed, was altogether beyond anything he had ever witnessed before ; it was almost impossible to realise that even an angel could attain to such grandeur, and that he was one of the greatest souls who had ever passed through the spiritworld.”

In order to recount the last communication held with my son, I again quote from my diary :—

“ *Thursday, July 20, 1905.*—I felt a powerful current passing through my brain, and instantly recognised that it was from my Glorified son Norman. I was quite aware that he was not near me in spirit. Presently the current was translated into the following : ‘ Since his Glorification it had been his duty to satisfy himself of the veracity of all the information contained in this revelation. This he had now done, and the privilege was granted him of holding direct communication with me to impress the above fact upon my mind.’ Little more than this was said when the current ceased. Immediately following it Minerva was present, and she assured me of the accuracy of the occurrence, observing that nothing was seen save a powerful current. She said it was a great honour granted to us both, and probably had never been allowed on any previous occasion ; that he had now completed the test, and had arrived at the abode where verification of the revelation alone could be obtained, and that for the same reason he was able to converse with me without the interposition of any go-between.

“ After getting to bed (that night) Minerva visited me for a few moments and said : ‘ A serious and important communication has been made to you to-day from your Glorified son Norman. Unknown to myself hitherto, this is the first proof given to you that the revelation vouchsafed to you is true. It is in a spiritual, and hence highest, sense the most convincing proof that could be given you, and of course you had to wait until Norman was Glorified before he could actually satisfy himself of its veracity. As a spirit and then as an angel he was instinctively satisfied of its complete truthfulness, but not until he had finished the test, been restored to his eternal complete condition, and Glorified, could he as a matter of fact prove it for a certainty. You are highly favoured in thus receiving a communication direct from Heaven, which for more reasons than one has

never been previously allowed man. Other proofs will follow.' ”

Finally, I have Minerva's permission to say how very much astonished she was to find that my son made such rapid progress in the spiritworld, from sphere to sphere, advancing past herself until he reached the upper limit of the Sixth Sphere. It exposed, even to her view, the absolutely impartial justice of the Father. Her pupil eventually to reach Heaven before his advanced instructor—engaged in such a work as this had been—was enough to create surprise even to a great and learned angel like Minerva.